



For Immediate Release

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Cardin, Mikulski Applaud Federal Grant to UMD to Study the Cause of Intra-sex Fish in Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Researchers hope to close critical knowledge gap on effect of contraceptive and hormone replacement drugs once they enter the nation's waters

WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-Md.) today welcomed news of a \$238,055 grant from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to the University of Maryland (UMD) for a study designed to deepen our understanding of the factors behind the intra-sex fish that have been documented throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the safety of America's drinking water supplies. The UMD researchers will explore the source and effects of gestagens – natural and synthetic contraceptive and hormone replacement pharmaceuticals – on aquatic organisms after they enter the Chesapeake Bay watershed through wastewater treatment plant effluent and agricultural runoff.

"To adequately protect our drinking water supplies and overall public health, we must understand the cause of the abnormal fish we are seeing locally," said **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee**. "Fish, like the fathead minnow that will be closely examined by University of Maryland researchers in this first-of-its-kind study, are sensitive indicators of the overall health of our waters. Half a century after the Water Resources Research grants were first established, this program continues to be relevant to our economy and our environment, as well as the health and safety of our communities."

"The health and future of the Chesapeake Bay plays an integral role in the health and economic well-being of Marylanders," said **Senator Mikulski, Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which funds USGS**. "Through hands-on research at the University of Maryland, we will better understand changes to Maryland's fish population critical to both fishers and consumers. These investments in the Bay are investments in the communities that depend on the Bay, supporting jobs today and jobs tomorrow. I will continue to fight to protect the Bay, Maryland's greatest natural resource, and the lives and livelihoods that depend on it."

Senator Cardin, with Senator John Boozman (R-Ark.), has authored legislation, the Water Resources Research Act (S. 970), that would reauthorize federal grant funding for water resources research institutes in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The act will provide continued support for important research on state and regional water challenges, provide training for hydrologists and other water-related scientists and engineers, and fund public outreach and education on water issues. This bill was reported with overwhelming support from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and unanimous consent is currently being sought to report the bill favorably from the Senate.

The University of Maryland grant is one of four such awards totaling about \$1 million this year through the National Competitive Grants program. The program aims to promote collaboration between USGS and university scientists in research on significant national and regional water resources issues; promote the dissemination and results of the research funded under this program; and assist in the training of scientists in water resources.

The federal funding for this program is required to be matched with non-federal dollars each year. Any investigator at an accredited institution of higher learning in the United States is eligible to apply for a grant through a [Water Research Institute or Center](#) established under the provisions of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984. First authorized in 1964, the Water Resources Research Amendments Act was most recently reauthorized in 2006, in PL 109-471. The current authorization expired in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011.

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