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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator DeSteph's Statement on Chesapeake Bay Foundation Stop Work Order and Notice to Comply

(Virginia Beach, VA): Senator Bill DeSteph released the following statement regarding the Stop Work Order and Notice to Comply issued by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation:

“My office received numerous calls, emails, pictures, and videos regarding Oyster Reefs under construction in the Lynnhaven River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. Grave concerns were expressed over dangerous materials being utilized, including asphalt, plastic, concrete with wire, and rebar, which would not only harm the delicate ecosystem of the Bay, but present safety hazards as well. People were especially disappointed to learn that the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Lynnhaven River Now had caused damage to the very waterways they are entrusted to protect.

With the help of residents, local fishermen, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and the VMRC, we investigated. Thanks to the VMRC Stop Work Order issued on 6.2.22 and the Notice to Comply issued today, additional harm will be prevented and repair work will begin. Permits for the affected projects have been revoked.

I am grateful to everyone who helped bring this issue to my attention and especially, to all the stakeholders who work tirelessly to ensure the health and safety of our waterways, including Governor Glenn Youngkin, the Secretary of Natural Resources Travis Voyles, Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata, Councilman Linwood Branch, and City of Virginia Beach leadership. I am also grateful to my constituents, local civic leagues, and all interested parties who attended our town halls to voice their concerns. Participation in the process is one of the many things that make our country great and keeps our communities safe.

The Chesapeake Bay is without question one of our region's greatest treasures. We must do all we can to safeguard its well-being. Finding a balance between aquaculture, recreational, and navigational use of the Bay and its tributaries is paramount. I greatly respect the historic contributions of both the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Lynnhaven River Now and look forward to their continued good work as they strive for what's best for the Bay. They must now work together to rebuild public trust and assure the community that they can fulfill their fiduciary role as stewards of the Bay and the funding they are entrusted to administer.”

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