

News

Press Releases

Championed by Pingree, York River to Receive Long-Awaited Federal Protections

Pingree has been leading the decade-long effort to protect the York River by adding it into the National Park System's Wild and Scenic Rivers Program; the provision is included in the Fiscal Year 2023 funding bill

Washington, December 23, 2022

Tags: [*My Work on the Appropriations Committee*](#), [*Energy and Environment*](#), [*Fighting Climate Change*](#)



WASHINGTON, DC— After years of advocacy alongside the York River watershed communities, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) today secured long-sought federal protections for approximately 30.8

miles of the river in southeast Maine and surrounding acreage in the Fiscal Year 2023 government funding bill now headed for President Biden's desk. The York River has gained a 'Wild and Scenic' river designation which will direct more federal funding and technical assistance from the National Parks Service and lift the region's profile as a national destination. It also provides a local forum for the four watershed communities to collaboratively address long-term river stewardship needs.

"A 'Wild and Scenic' designation for the York River is a vital step in permanently protecting the York River and ensuring access to clean water and a thriving working waterfront for generations to come," **said Pingree**. "After working with the surrounding communities to complete this designation since my earliest days in Congress, I'm thrilled the provision was included as part of this year's funding bill. With federal support, the York

“It is most appropriate that the York River watershed be honored with a National Park Service Wild and Scenic designation,” **said Paul Dest, Executive Director of the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve**, one of the partners that has worked for 12 years exploring and then seeking designation for the river. “The York River has it all: Diverse fish and wildlife habitats, estuarine and freshwater rivers and streams that meander unencumbered through a beautiful landscape on their way to the sea, a rich cultural history, and abundant opportunities for human use and enjoyment.”

Pingree first introduced legislation to add the York River to the National Park Service’s Wild-and-Scenic List in the 116th Congress. Her bill followed a three-year study (funded by legislation that Pingree introduced in 2011 and Congress passed in 2014) by local stakeholders that recommended the designation. In 2018, the voters of York and Eliot overwhelmingly passed referendums to move forward with the designation, as did the town councils of Kittery and South Berwick.

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