

March 10, 2020



Town of Bethany Beach
214 Garfield Pkwy.
Bethany Beach, DE 19930

Dear Mayor Killmer and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Center for the Inland Bays, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in coastal conservation. The recent purchase of the Walcek property and its wetland resources sets an example that I hope other coastal communities may follow.

Protection of wetlands and the beneficial services that they provide to our communities should not be taken for granted. This point has most recently been illustrated by two significant events. The first is the rollback of federal wetlands protections under the Waters of the United States ruling issued earlier this year. The second is the decision by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the agency responsible for carrying out federal wetlands regulations, to allow construction of homes on boardwalks in wetlands at the nearby Breakwater Beach neighborhood. These actions set the stage for further destruction and degradation of wetlands in Delaware, where no state level protections for non-tidal wetlands exist.

Communities such as yours rely on the flood control services that these wetlands provide, and the larger region also relies on the water quality and wildlife habitat services of these wetlands. Perhaps no other coastal community has such serious flood control concerns as Bethany Beach. And as other nearby wetlands are lost, the services of each remaining wetland become more valuable. Furthermore, wetlands and undeveloped open space are essential to maintaining local biodiversity, an aspect of our communities that deserve more attention. Open space protection has also been shown time and time again to improve property values.

Your decisive action to protect the property of owners of Bethany is laudable. And it follows on previous Councils' decisions to protect dozens of acres at the Natter property. Your actions support the Inland Bays Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan and for that I am grateful. In my interactions with other municipalities and the county, I regularly celebrate and encourage your example of forward thinking coastal conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bason", written in a cursive style.

Chris Bason
Executive Director