

in addition to our regular naval force, a sufficient number of steam frigates to guard the Chesapeake Bay. In case of war, they might be stationed in Hampton Roads, where they would be ready to meet an enemy at the capes, or assist in defending the fortifications at Old Point. They might follow a superior fleet, if their own force was greater than that of the steam vessels which accompanied it, might watch its movements, prevent it from landing troops or ascending our rivers, and cut off its communication with the sea. But the probability is, that a fleet would not advance far into the bay, or attempt to occupy a permanent position in our waters, while we had a strong disposable force to check its operations and take advantage of any accident or disaster that might befall it. In calling the attention of the Legislature to this subject, I wish to be understood as only claiming for Maryland, that protection and defence which it is the duty of the general government to extend to every State in the Union.

WM. GRASON.