

—PA— Environment Digest

*An Update on
Environmental
Issues in
Pennsylvania*

Edited By David E. Hess, Crisci Associates

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[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Watershed Groups Concerned About Use of Federal AML Funding, DEP Responds



Watershed groups across the state [expressed concern this week](#) about whether or not the Department of Environmental Protection will provide them with funding to cleanup abandoned mine drainage from the recently revitalized federal Abandoned Mine Lands Fund.

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty said in response the agency has not made a decision on the issue, but that they would continue to fund mine drainage abatement projects.

[Watershed and environmental groups all over Pennsylvania](#) fought, along with the Rendell Administration and Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, to have the Fund reauthorized in December 2006. Included was a provision that increased the potential funding for abandoned mine drainage projects from 10 percent to 30 percent, much of which has gone to local watershed-sponsored projects in the past.

DEP held public meetings on how to use the new federal funds most effectively and heard presentations by watershed groups all over the state on how they could not only undertake more needed projects, but stretch the funds by bringing local matching funds to projects. ([Summaries of the meetings are available online.](#))

About \$8.4 million would be available for local mine drainage cleanup projects this year if the full 30 percent allocation was used.

DEP Secretary [Kathleen A. McGinty this week said](#) reports stating that the Commonwealth has decided not to fund abandoned mine drainage projects were not accurate. The Secretary said these projects will continue to be funded through the department's abandoned mine reclamation program this year and beyond.

Secretary McGinty's statement did not indicate whether watershed groups would receive funding or what percentage of the federal funds would be made available or when they would make these decisions.

"Reports that the department will not provide funding for acid mine drainage treatment projects are false," said Secretary McGinty. "The Governor remains firmly committed to using all available resources to restore our land and water that was damaged by mining before environmental laws were put in place to prevent this kind pollution,"

"What we are doing now, and have been doing for the past several months, is engaging the public to help us determine how we can best use our available resources and, in the years ahead, to reclaim abandoned mine lands and clean up acid mine tainted

streams,” said Secretary McGinty. “We have held public hearings around the state and are continuing to meet with focus groups to help us make the best decisions on how to carry out this important environmental protection program in the long term. All Pennsylvanians should be assured we will fund abandoned mine reclamation and stream restoration projects as part of this effort.”

NewsClip: [Groups Push for Funding to Revive Polluted Waterways](#)
[DEP Mining Official Underscores Commitment to AMD Abatement](#)

DEP Grants Extensions for Meeting Chesapeake Bay Cleanup, But No Money

The Department of Environmental Protection announced it would be giving municipalities more time to upgrade their sewage treatment plants to meet new restrictions needed to help implement the [Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy](#), but no increased funding from the state is being proposed.

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty reportedly [told the Patriot-News editorial board](#) and the [PA Municipal Authorities Association](#) that Gov. Rendell would be recommending increased funding in his state budget, but no funding was announced.

Secretary McGinty apologized for any misunderstanding of what was said earlier about the Governor recommending funding, adding the Governor would be convening a high-level task force to examine sewage-related needs.

[PMAA has estimated](#) the cost to meet the Chesapeake Bay cleanup requirements is approaching \$1 billion. DEP had been saying the cost of the cleanup was a minimum of \$190 million, but Secretary McGinty denied that DEP ever officially used that figure, although it was used by various other DEP officials, in statements to the press and in working groups formed to study the Tributary Strategy. ([See Point Source Work Group report.](#))

Over the last six years, the Rendell Administration and the General Assembly have cut funding to support municipal wastewater treatment plant operations in the Act 339 Operating Grants Program by over \$318 million.

To help answer questions about the state’s Bay Strategy, [Secretary McGinty mailed](#) invitations to municipalities on February 15 to send representatives to a special meeting on February 20 in Harrisburg saying, “Recent media reports suggest a great deal of misunderstanding exists with regard to the Commonwealth’s Chesapeake Bay water quality improvement obligations. This meeting will provide an opportunity to answer questions you might have on the state’s Chesapeake Bay Compliance Plan.”

The [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#) last week [issued a statement](#) saying, “While there is disagreement over the estimated total cost for compliance, there is no disagreement that meeting the Chesapeake Bay nutrient limits will impose a significant financial burden upon municipalities. By closing the existing funding gap that currently precludes many of Pennsylvania’s municipalities from moving forward on these projects, Pennsylvania can protect rate payers from absorbing the high cost of the necessary “green infrastructure” upgrades required to meet existing permit limits.”

To sort through some of the issues surrounding the cost of the Bay Strategy, the Senate this week unanimously approved [Senate Resolution 224](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to do a study of the costs of implementing the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy and report back to the Senate. ([See separate story.](#))

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The Senate Republican Policy Committee is also set to hold a public hearing on the cost of the Chesapeake Bay cleanup on February 21 in Harrisburg. ([See separate story.](#))

Gov. Rendell this week [issued a statement saying](#) cuts in federal funding for water and wastewater infrastructure have made it difficult for Pennsylvania to maintain these systems.

“Continued cuts at the federal level are making it more and more difficult to keep pace with the work that’s needed to ensure we have reliable systems in place that deliver dependable services,” said Gov. Rendell. “The Commonwealth alone has suffered a 50 percent cut in the federal funds we had received previously to support water infrastructure. Without that needed support, our economy, environment and quality of life will suffer.

“I was disappointed last week to see President Bush’s proposed budget for next year included \$330 million in cuts to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—largely aimed at water and sewer projects. This is unacceptable, especially for us in Pennsylvania and other Chesapeake Bay watershed states that are working to meet the federal cleanup mandates. As Congress considers this budget proposal, I urge them to restore funding to this critical program; otherwise, our ability to tackle the serious environmental and economic infrastructure challenges facing our communities is jeopardized.”

In order to address this funding shortfall, the Governor signaled his intent to sign an executive order that will focus on finding solutions to Pennsylvania’s drinking water and wastewater system needs, including new funding options and non-structural alternatives to capital upgrades, such as nutrient credit trading, water re-use and conservation.

The executive order will establish the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Task Force, which is to develop a report by October 1 that analyzes issues related to cost-effective and sustainable investment in the state’s water and sewer infrastructure. The report also is to provide recommendations and financing options to support water-related services in the Governor’s fiscal year 2009-10 budget proposal.

The task force will be comprised of representatives of the administration, General Assembly, academia, the state’s Office of Consumer Advocate, as well as local government and municipal associations.

NewsClips: [Vance Bay Impact Bill Gets OK](#)
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Other News

- State Treasurer Makes Investments in Solving Environmental Problems
- Gov. Rendell Urges Congress to Consider PA's Priorities in Farm Bill
- Delaware River Watershed Education Youth Eco-Leadership Summit April 20-22
- Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference, Shad Symposium Set for March 28
- Teachers Invited to Workshop on Acid Mine Drainage in PA
- DEP Lifts Drought Watch in All Pennsylvania Counties
- PA CleanWays Coastal Cleanups in 2007 Net Over 9 Tons of Junk
- PA AWWA Sponsors The Chlorine Security Summit March 19
- Children, Nature, Wellness: Open the Door to Learning Conference Call for Papers
- Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour Comes to Allentown on March 2
- Commonwealth Honored With National Award From Travel Writers
- Game Commission's Howard Nursery Offers Trees to Improve Wildlife Habitat
- Wildlife For Everyone Foundation Donates Berks County Land
- Farmland Preservation Board OKs \$74.2 Million Preservation Investment
- Guidebook to PA Environmental Laws and Regulations Now Available
- BioEnergy International Breaks Ground on PA's 1st Ethanol Plant in Clearfield
- Ground Broken on \$100 Million Solar Manufacturing Project in Bucks County
- Pennsylvania Has 103 Buildings Meeting EPA's Energy Star Standards
- Help Wanted: PRC Environmental Education Coordinator

Spotlight

- Effects of Nitrate Deposition on Wildlife and Humans, *By Judith Y. Aker, PA Senior Environment Corps*

Feature

- New Online Guide to PA's Forbes Trail Features History, Outdoor Recreation

Grants & Awards

[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

On the Hill

Session Schedule

The Senate and House will return to voting session the week of March 10. The Senate and House will hold hearings on Gov. Rendell's proposed budget in the interim.

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

On the Senate/House Agenda/Bills Introduced

The Senate and House published committee schedules and floor Calendars for the week of March 10—

Calendars

House (March 10): [House Resolution 546](#) (George-D-Clearfield) urging Congress to investigate gas and energy prices; [House Resolution 518](#) (Petrone-D-Allegheny) commemorating the life and contributions of Lady Bird Johnson for her leadership role in preserving its natural beauty.

The Special Energy Session Calendar includes: [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) establishing a grant program and authorizing indebtedness for Energy Development Authority; [Special Session House Bill 13](#) (Bennington-R-Mifflin) amends the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to provide for increased use of energy efficiency, extends the compliance period from 15 to 21 years and providing additional milestones for the use of alternative energy.

Senate (March 10): [House Bill 1281](#) (Freeman-D-Lehigh) requiring municipalities to take steps to protect the Appalachian Trail; [House Bill 1329](#) (Kessler-D-Berks) further providing for appeals and challenges to zoning ordinances; [House Bill 1330](#) (Kessler) further providing for appeals from official maps and local development ordinances; [Senate Bill 1264](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) providing for geologists in training; [Senate Bill 1248](#) (Rhoades-R-Schuylkill) providing for a home heating oil rebate program; [House Bill 1214](#) (Surra-D-Elk) changing the terms of Game Commissioners from eight to four years

Committees

House: Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Agriculture.

Senate: Senate Republican Policy Committee hearing on the Costs of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy.

Bills Introduced

The following bill of interest were introduced this week—

Mine Reclamation/Switchgrass: [Special Session House Bill 55](#) (Brooks-R-Crawford) promoting the planting of switchgrass and other biofuels on mine reclamation lands. ([See separate story.](#))

Energy Star Tax Credits: [House Bill 2245](#) (M.Smith-D-Allegheny) tax credit for Energy Star rated product manufacturing and [House Bill 2247](#) (M.Smith) tax credits for Energy Star rated glass or window technologies.

Senate/House Bills Moving

These environmental bills of interest were considered by the Senate and House this week—

Senate

Deep Mine Safety: [Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) making the first comprehensive revisions to the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act in 45 years, in-part based on recommendations made after the [2002 Quecreek Mine Rescue](#), was passed by the Senate and now goes to the House for action.

Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Costs: [Senate Resolution 224](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to study the cost for wastewater treatment plants to comply with the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy was adopted by the Senate. (*See separate stories on [Cleanup Funding](#) and [Policy Committee hearing](#).*)

Game Commission Board: The Senate Game and Fisheries Committee amended and reported out the [House Bill 1214](#) (Surra-D-Elk) changing the terms of Game Commissioners from eight to four years. The bill is on the Senate Calendar for action.

Trespass Fines: [Senate Bill 1096](#) (Gordner-R-Columbia) providing for the disposition of fines for trespass in an account reserved for snowmobiles and ATVs was referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Licensed Geologists: [Senate Bill 1264](#) (Boscola-D-Lehigh) providing for geologists in training was reported from the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

Home Heating Assistance: [Senate Bill 1248](#) (Rhoades-R-Schuylkill) providing for a home heating rebate program was amended and reported out of the Senate Finance Committee and is now on the Senate Calendar for action.

House

Energy Conservation: [House Bill 2200](#) (George-D-Clearfield) requiring utilities to adopt energy efficiency and demand-side management programs was amended on the floor of the House, passed and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Governor's Energy Proposal: [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) establishing a grant program and authorizing indebtedness for Energy Development Authority was amended on Second Consideration on the House floor and will not be considered until the Special Session resumes the week of March 10.

Portfolio Standards: [Special Session House Bill 13](#) (Bennington-R-Mifflin) amends the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act to provide for increased use of energy efficiency, extends the compliance period from 15 to 21 years and providing additional milestones for the use of alternative energy was reported from the House Appropriations Committee and is on the House Special Session Calendar for action.

Poultry Feed: [House Resolution 300](#) (Bennington-D-Allegheny) banning the use of arsenic in poultry feed was reported from the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and is now on the House Calendar for action.

Senate Approves Comprehensive Deep Mine Safety Bill, Now Moves to House



The Senate this week approved [Senate Bill 949](#) (Kasunic-D-Somerset) that provides for the first rewrite of the Bituminous Coal Mine Safety Act in 45 years, in-part based on recommendations made after the [2002 Quecreek Mine Rescue](#).

"Since the law was first enacted, the mining industry has drastically advanced with new techniques and practices," Sen. Kasunic said. "Unfortunately, due to a lack of regulatory authority, our law has been unable to keep pace with this technology."

Sen. Mary Jo White (R-Venango), who chairs the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, said the Senate worked closely with the Department of Environmental Protection, coal mine operators and mine union officials to develop the package.

"This legislation provides new, common sense measures to prevent, prepare for and respond to mining accidents and emergencies," Sen. White said. "It will help to improve coordination of mine safety efforts, set higher standards for mine operators and represents the culmination of a strenuous effort to make this inherently dangerous job safer."

Senate Bill 949 would create a new Board of Coal Mine Safety to keep Pennsylvania's mine safety standards regularly updated. The seven member board will be chaired by the DEP secretary, with three members representing mine operators and three representing mine workers.

The legislation also provides for greater legal responsibility for operators to ensure mine safety, and enables the state to establish a central database of mine maps, White said. It also addresses responses to accidents, requiring mine operators to notify DEP within 15 minutes of an accident, and updates ventilation and roof support requirements.

"The Board of Coal Mine Safety will regularly consider new technology and new approaches that improve safety, so that Pennsylvania doesn't go another 50 years before updating its mining regulations," said Sen. White. "Passage of this measure was the result of bipartisan cooperation and hard work. I look forward to seeing it enacted so that the proud tradition of Pennsylvania mining is as safe as it possibly can be."

Pennsylvania is now the fourth largest coal producer in the United States, following Wyoming, West Virginia and Kentucky. Since 1870 there have been approximately 51,000 mining-related fatalities in the Commonwealth.

NewsClips: [Senate OKs Bill to Update Mine Safety Measurers](#)
[Mine Safety Bill Clears State Senate, Heads to House](#)
[Mine Safety Bill Long Overdue](#)

Link: [National Geographic Channel Re-Lives Quecreek Mine Rescue Feb. 19](#)

Senate OKs Resolution on Study of Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy Costs

The Senate this week unanimously approved [Senate Resolution 224](#) (Vance-R-Cumberland) that requires a third-party study of the costs for sewage treatment facilities to fulfill the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy

“Just this week the Chesapeake Bay Foundation joined those requesting that the state assist with the costs of implementing the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy,” Sen. Vance said. “In addition, the Department of Environmental Protection has given a variety of figures about what it will cost municipalities to do necessary upgrades. We need to find out what the true costs are before funding sources can be more thoroughly discussed.”

Senate Resolution 224 directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to review estimates of the costs that sewage treatment facilities will incur to comply with the CBTS.

“The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee has an excellent reputation for doing these type of studies in a nonpartisan, objective way,” Sen. Vance added. “I have full confidence in the work of their staff.”

Pennsylvania has been working with other states over the last two decades to implement programs to improve the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. In 2005 the governor unveiled Pennsylvania’s bay strategy. It was designed by the Department of Environmental Protection to implement multi-state agreements intended to achieve significant reductions in the pollutants that have degraded the bay by 2010.

These pollutants can come from a variety of sources: agriculture, stormwater runoff, wastewater treatment plants, septic systems, forested lands and atmospheric deposition.

The Senate Republican Policy Committee is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the cost of the Chesapeake Bay cleanup on February 21 in Harrisburg. (*See separate story.*)

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Sen. Vance

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Bill Requiring Energy Conservation, Use Reduction Approved by House



Rep. George

The House this week passed [House Bill 2200](#) (George-D-Clearfield) that would require electric utilities to reduce overall electric usage by 2.5 percent and peak demand by 4 percent through energy conservation programs and the installation of smart electric meters.

The legislation is similar to [House Bill 2143](#) (Ross-R-Chester) and was adopted with bipartisan support by a vote of 152-45.

"House Bill 2200 would require utilities to reduce overall output by 2.5 percent, and peak demand -- when energy prices are at their highest -- by 4 percent," said Rep. George, who serves as Majority Chair of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. "It also would direct the Public Utility Commission to change the dynamic so that utilities promoting energy conservation

are rewarded rather than punished."

"Limiting demand and promoting energy efficiency are proven ways to save energy and make the best use of resources," Rep. Chris Ross said. "Strong energy conservation and demand side management programs implemented in the next two years can go a long way to reducing the rate increases projected when electric generation price caps come off."

Rep. Freeman offered an amendment adopted by the House that requires smart meters to be installed across the Commonwealth in 10 years. Smart meters, already installed in some areas of Pennsylvania, enable consumers to adjust electric usage to price changes.

"Smart meters are an important part of any strategy to reduce energy costs for consumers and conserve energy," Rep. Robert Freeman (D-Lehigh) said. "Smart meters provide a direct cost savings to consumers that use them. The technology also benefits utilities by reducing energy demand at its most expensive peak period when the purchasing of energy by utilities is the most costly."

"In the Lehigh Valley, PPL has already installed these meters for its customers, allowing the utility to more easily identify power outages and the need for repairs, thereby cutting down on customer complaints," Rep. Freeman noted. "Smart-meter technology truly provides a win-win situation for both customers and utilities, and gets us closer to the goal of achieving real energy conservation."

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

NewsClip: [House Approves Electricity Conservation Plans, Smart Meters](#)
[House Passes Bill to Require Cuts in Electricity Use](#)
[Energy Conservation Measure Heads to Senate](#)

House Considers Amendments to Governor's \$850 Million Energy Plan

The House in Special Energy Session considered amendments to [Special Session House Bill 1](#) (DePasquale-D-York) that establishes Gov. Rendell's \$850 million bond-funded Energy Independence Plan to support clean and renewable energy resources and energy conservation programs.

The bill would allocate \$850 million in bond funding to the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority and the Commonwealth Financing Agency to support research, development and deployment of various alternative energy projects and technologies.

Proposals include creating a rebate program for the purchase of energy-efficient appliances and establishing a rebate and grant program for the use of solar energy. In addition, a percentage of the funding would provide grants and loans for alternative energy projects, alternative fuels, demand-side management and energy-efficient measures.

"We are in a position to become a leader in alternative energy production and we need to continue to think outside the box and provide incentives that will encourage industries and consumers to be more energy efficient, while bringing new economic development opportunities to our region," Rep. Eugene DePasquale said.

"Investing in alternative energy and moving away from our dependence on Middle East oil will provide us with an opportunity to create jobs, protect our environment and national security interests, and strengthen the energy industry all while adding cost savings for consumers," Rep. DePasquale said. "I am excited to move forward with this initiative and provide the Senate with a comprehensive and detailed approach to making Pennsylvania a national leader in alternative energy production."

The House added amendments to the bill that would provide a set aside of \$30 million to support the development of wind energy facilities, \$5 million for the Keystone Home Energy Conservation Program, \$25 million to promote the development of high performance green buildings and the use of up to \$25 million to install pollution control equipment for small coal-fired power plants.

"Yesterday, our state lawmakers said 'yes' to good-paying jobs in the utility industry," said [Paul Bachman](#), President of The Central PA Building Trades. "Environmental Resources and Energy Committee Chairman Bud George deserves special recognition for his efforts at building a bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives."

"Today, the House took an important step towards protecting Pennsylvania jobs, Pennsylvania coal and Pennsylvania power producers," said George Ellis, President of the PA Coal Association. "This bipartisan show of support tells us that our lawmakers are serious about including clean coal technologies in our long term energy independence strategy."

The House defeated an amendment that would have earmarked \$25 million a year for 10 years from the State Store Fund to support the programs, rather than financing an \$850 million bond.

The bill will be in position for a final vote the week of March 10 when the House returns to Special Energy Session.



Rep. DePasquale

NewsClip: [House Prepares Green Energy Bill for Final Vote](#)
[House Adds More to Green Energy Bill](#)
[Going Green Is Going to Cost a Lot of Green](#)

House Environmental Committee Takes Comments on Extending Electric Rate Caps

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee held a hearing on [Special Session House Bill 54](#) (George-D-Clearfield) that would extend the existing rate caps on electricity prices from 2010 to 2013.

"No one wants to use a stick to protect citizens and businesses from dangerous electric-rate increases," said Rep. George. "However, sometimes a stick is needed to move people off self-centered obstinacy."

"The priority remains enactment of a comprehensive energy policy that would put Pennsylvania on the road to energy independence," Rep. George said. "However, the threat of rate increases of 60, 70 percent or more affecting more than 4 million electric customers makes development of stopgap legislation imperative."

Those testifying included: Tyrone Christy, Commissioner, Public Utility Commission; Sonny Popowsky, consumer advocate of Pennsylvania; Carl Wood, regulatory affairs director, Utility Workers Union of America; and Morgan O'Brien, president, Duquesne Light Company.

[Copies of the testimony are available online.](#)

PUC Commissioner Tyrone Christy told the Committee the competitive market for electricity is broken and Pennsylvania is unable to exert any influence on market prices because of federal law and the pricing system used by the PJM Interconnection that sets prices at the most expensive price at any given time for all generators, regardless of actual generation costs.

As an example, he said if 10,000 megawatts of power are needed and at that point in time 1 megawatt of gas-fired generation is available for 10 cents per kwh, then those providing all 10,000 megawatts will be paid 10 cents per kwh even though 9,999 megawatts may be coming from coal-fired power plants willing to sell power at 2.5 cents per kwh.

Commissioner Christy recommended the PUC be given authority to require utilities to issue competitive solicitations for the construction of needed generating units to serve increased demand with the intent of driving the market away from PJM.

He also recommended against a provision in the bill setting a 20 percent cap on long-term contracts for electricity and supported the extension of rate caps as a short-term measure, but he said caps do not offer a long-term solution to the problem. Fundamental changes to the regulatory framework are needed in Pennsylvania.

Sonny Popowsky, Consumer Advocate, said he supported rate caps as long as the electric utilities were recovering stranded costs for their nuclear power plants and that whether it happens now or later, the caps will come off and we have to provide for a reasonable transition.

Popowsky recommended in this and several other Senate and House hearings on this topic the state should adopt a "least cost procurement" policy for electric distributors rather than continue to use the existing "prevailing market price" standard. He noted the natural gas industry has been deregulated for many years and has used the least cost method with success since 1984.

Popowsky also said there is a “substantial untapped store of energy efficiency and demand response resources that are less costly than much of our electric generation today” waiting to be implemented and he supported House Bill 2200 which establishes goals for overall electricity usage reduction.

Carl Wood, National Director of Regulatory Affairs for the Utility Workers Union of America and a former Commissioner of the California Public Utilities Commission during that state’s electricity crisis, said Pennsylvania should reassert control over utility investment in new generation facilities and set operating and maintenance standards for all power stations.

The comments of Duquesne Light were entered into the record by John Laudenslager because Morgan K. O’Brien, President and CEO of Duquesne was caught in bad weather coming to Harrisburg.

Duquesne’s comments noted they have been without rate caps for over five years and their rates for residential and small businesses are lower today than they were 15 years ago and will continue to be lower through the end of 2010 “without any special legislation to aide in that transition or any need to phase in rate hikes to avoid price shock.”

Duquesne also said the pricing policies of the PJM Interconnection are not customer friendly and are “exclusively in favor of generators over customers.”

Other groups also provided written comments to the Committee.

[Doug Biden](#), President of the [Electric Power Generation Association](#), offered numerous reasons why extending price caps would ultimately lead to higher prices and less reliable service for Pennsylvania consumers.

Biden emphasized that extending caps on retail prices would require electric utilities to sell electricity at a loss. "This policy would increase the risk of investing in generating plants and other forms of electricity infrastructure," Biden said. "The end result would be more expensive, less reliable supplies of electricity for consumers."

Biden noted that power suppliers would likely add premiums to their prices to cover the risk that utilities would not be able to pay for the electricity. The uncertainty created by such a rate cap extension would also discourage generators from building needed new generation in Pennsylvania.

Biden said, "Wholesale electricity prices have been rising due primarily to higher fuel costs, not because of electricity competition." According to the Public Utility Commission, since 1997, prices have increased over 180 percent for fuel oil, approximately 140 percent for natural gas and unleaded gasoline, and over 50 percent for coal. Biden said that energy prices have also increased due to rapid growth in demand for fuels from developing countries and increasingly stringent environmental requirements.

Biden noted that while price caps have been in effect since January 1997 for most electricity customers in Pennsylvania, ultimately consumers will have to pay the market price for electricity. Biden said, "The longer electricity prices are capped, the more difficult it will be to help consumers make the inevitable adjustment to market-based prices. Delaying the inevitable transition to market prices will not move Pennsylvania forward but instead will make the transition even more difficult."

The [Retail Energy Supply Association](#) believes that policy makers should help customers manage the coming electric rate increases, rather than simply extending rate caps, which will only compound the problem and inevitably lead to higher rates for Pennsylvania consumers.

RESA believes the Public Utility Commission has already taken a proactive and prudent approach to addressing this issue. Last year, the Commission issued three major orders to address the expiration of rate caps and the transition to a competitive market. These orders were the product of several years of regulatory proceedings where the Commission weighed the views of utilities, consumer advocates, retail suppliers and other stakeholders.

RESA urged the General Assembly to take a similar practical approach, rather than compounding the problem by extending rate caps.

As rate caps expire, competitive suppliers, like RESA members, will be able to enter the market to compete for customers. Basic economics have shown that competitive market forces are the only sustainable way to keep costs down and to increase innovation. This has already proven true for many western Pennsylvania customers.

In the Duquesne Light service territory where rate caps have already expired, more than 45 percent of consumers have switched to competitive suppliers. In addition, residential and small business customers are paying less today for utility generation service today than they were in 1996.

[David G. DeCampli](#), president of PPL Electric Utilities, said, "Passage of this bill, which would extend artificial price controls on electricity, would result in financial instability for Pennsylvania's electricity delivery companies, threatening reliability for customers. While this extension of price caps may be perceived as politically expedient, it simply will postpone inevitable price increases for customers while threatening a California-type electricity crisis in the Commonwealth.

"Passage of this legislation would mean the state is reneging on an agreement it made with PPL Electric Utilities more than a decade ago. In addition to putting PPL Electric Utilities and other companies in serious financial jeopardy, it sends the signal that Pennsylvania cannot be trusted to live up to its commitments to the state's businesses. The message sent by legislators supporting this bill clearly is at odds with the state's desire to attract new businesses and the jobs that they provide.

"This punitive legislation is particularly disappointing because PPL Electric Utilities has kept up its end of the bargain for 10 years, capping our generation rates. Six other electric delivery companies in the state have been permitted to remove their rate caps as scheduled. To now prohibit rate cap expiration for the remaining five, who originally agreed to even longer price controls, is particularly unjust.

"The financial distress caused by this legislation will severely limit the ability of the state's electricity delivery companies to deploy demand-reduction programs, including smart meter technology," said DeCampli.

Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) serves as Majority Chair of the Committee and Rep. Scott Hutchinson (R-Venango) serves as Minority Chair.

NewsClips: [PPL Claims Rate Cap Extensions Will Harm Reliability, Customers Bill Confronts Impact of Rate Cap Expiration](#)
[Editorial: Price Runup Speaks to Need for Conservation](#)
[Editorial: Start Preparing for Rate Shock](#)

Rep. Brooks Bill to Encourage Bioenergy on Mine Reclamation Sites



To help further the efforts of private industry to invest in the bioenergy field, Rep. Michele Brooks (R-Lawrence) is sponsoring [Special Session House Bill 55](#) to encourage the planting of switchgrass and other bioenergy crops on reclaimed mine lands through tax credits.

“Reclaimed mine lands can have multiple purposes, and what better way to help with our expanding energy needs than by planting switchgrass and other bioenergy crops,” Rep. Brooks said. “Consumers cannot afford to continue paying ever-increasing prices for energy. There needs to be affordable alternatives, and this legislation will help expand Pennsylvania’s alternative energy portfolio to allow that to happen.”

Specifically, her proposal would apply to all lands affected by surface mining activities, not just to re-mined lands.

The legislation would authorize the Department of Environmental Protection to use funds from the \$7 million that was appropriated in 2001 in order to facilitate the implementation of the full-cost bonding program and to provide guarantees to cover stage three reclamation liabilities on areas replanted with switchgrass or other bioenergy crops.

“If we are to encourage greater use and production of bio-fuels, we must first have an available and sustainable feedstock,” Rep. Brooks added. “This legislation seeks to encourage the development of this feedstock, while addressing an important environmental issue -- that of remediating our surface mine lands. I believe this is a diversified, solid strategy that helps protect our land while also addressing future energy needs.”

Senate GOP Policy Committee to Hold Hearing on Cost of Chesapeake Bay Cleanup

The Senate Republican Policy Committee will hold a public hearing on the cost of the Department of Environmental Protection’s [Chesapeake Bay cleanup strategy](#) on February 21 in Harrisburg.

Scheduled to testify are representatives of several affected municipalities, including Lewistown Borough, Mifflin County Carlisle Borough, Cumberland County and Fairview Township, York County, the PA Municipal Authorities Association, PA Builders Association and the PA Farm Bureau.

Several other groups will present comments on DEP’s nutrient credit trading program—Red Barn Trading Company and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty is also scheduled to testify and a representative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Chesapeake Bay Program was invited to provide comments.

The hearing is being held at the request of Sen. Patricia Vance (R-Cumberland). The chair of the Committee is Sen. Jake Corman (R-Centre).

NewsClips: [Vance Bay Impact Bill Gets OK](#)
[Senate Calls for Study of Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Costs](#)
[Groups Push Funding to Revive Polluted Waterways](#)
[Lock Haven Bills to Skyrocket Under Chesapeake Bay Requirements](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Funding Sought](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Sticker Shock](#)
[Plants to Keep Nutrients at Bay, But Cost a Concern](#)

[State Asked to Fund Sewer Plant Upgrades](#)

[Passing the Buck on Water Quality](#)

[Chesapeake Sticker Shock](#)

[Danville Challenges Sewer Upgrade Requirements](#)

Links: [Chesapeake Bay Foundation Urges Environment Be Given More Priority](#)
[County Conservation Districts Concerned With Gov. Rendell's Proposed Budget](#)
[PA Farm Bureau Concerned About Budget Cuts to Vital Programs](#)
[PA Chesapeake Bay Program](#)

Other News

State Treasurer Makes Investments in Solving Environmental Problems



[State Treasurer Robin L. Wiessmann](#) announced she has invested \$15 million in publicly traded funds that hold stocks of companies that provide solutions for environmental problems or operate in a responsible manner with respect to the environment.

In making these strategic investments, Treasurer Wiessmann initiated Treasury's [Keystone Green Investment Strategy](#), which seeks superior returns for Commonwealth assets from clean technologies, such as innovative alternative or renewable energy sources, and clean and green technologies that enable companies to reduce their emissions to the environment.

Treasurer Wiessmann's action is the result of the recently developed Pennsylvania Investment Principles, which address the "next frontier of investing" by weighing the impact of geopolitical, environmental, governance, and other strategic factors on an investment's financial appropriateness. These factors allow Treasury's investment decisions to be accompanied by economic analysis of long-term considerations, including sustainability.

"Today's investments capitalize upon the advantages of the evolving clean, green technology sector to achieve prudent yet competitive returns for the Commonwealth," Wiessmann said. "As we continue to evaluate the impact of all strategic factors, we will be able to minimize risks and maximize nascent opportunities within the market."

A number of specific trends or factors demonstrate the potentially pervasive impact of environmental drivers:

- Global climate change, which will have profound impacts on many economic sectors including agriculture, shipping, insurance, and real estate;
- Volatility in price of carbon-based fuels, creating opportunities and risks to sectors reliant on such fuels; and
- The likelihood of carbon regulation has substantial transformational impacts.

These three economic drivers have transformational and dislocation impacts on the marketplace. Together they may create a "perfect storm," in which segments of the economic marketplace will be displaced disproportionately.

"As Treasurer and a prudent investor, I am obligated to identify investments such as these, which take cognizance of trends and developments that will have significant

influence on future performance," Wiessmann said. "Keystone Green will also offer the potential to create economic growth and jobs in the Commonwealth and promote energy efficiency and environmental protection in Pennsylvania and elsewhere."

"I applaud Treasurer Wiessmann for integrating environmental considerations into her examination of sustainability," said Brian Hill, President and CEO of the [Pennsylvania Environmental Council](#). "Her actions today move the Commonwealth into an advantageous investment space, capitalizing on the opportunities of clean technology to provide competitive returns on taxpayer's dollars as well as potentially boosting economic development."

Treasury will examine especially closely investment opportunities in Pennsylvania firms that position themselves to benefit from valuable advantages of doing business in the Commonwealth, including the state's renewable energy portfolio requirements and the public funding support available for alternative energy efforts.

The [Keystone Green Investment Strategy](#) includes several additional elements beyond today's announcement:

- A private investment program, which will provide [currently "up to"] \$40 million of financing for privately held firms or projects representing clean technology opportunities. Wiessmann and her staff expect to divide this into approximately \$15 million for attractive investments with that will directly benefit the Pennsylvania economy and \$25 million not subject to geographic considerations; and
- A public equity investment screen, which will be a variety of considerations designed to help all of Treasury's public equity managers to better evaluate whether their investment disciplines are taking fully into account the potential effects on their holdings of the factors noted above.

Treasury is working to implement these other components in the near future.

In addition, guided by the Investment Principles Treasury will exercise its influence as an institutional investor to encourage appropriate changes in corporate disclosure and governance practices with regard to environmental issues, including the release of information about management decisions that can expose the company to, or help it avoid, material threats from environmental factors.

Gov. Rendell Urges Congress to Consider PA's Priorities in Farm Bill

Gov. Rendell this week announced Pennsylvania's [latest recommendations](#) to Congress for the Farm Bill, a key piece of federal legislation that will guide agriculture conservation and nutrition programs for the next five years.

In a letter to Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, Gov. Rendell said the state's top Farm Bill priority is support for its initiative to expand the renewable energy industry. Cellulosic ethanol and agricultural renewable energy production can produce 60,000 new jobs in the state, while reducing our dependence on foreign energy sources and negative environmental impacts.

"Agriculture is the leading economic enterprise in Pennsylvania, contributing \$45 billion annually to the state's economy," said Gov. Rendell. "The Farm Bill offers the chance to address Pennsylvania's specific needs, and will not only benefit our farmers but all citizens of the Commonwealth."

Among the recommendations were:

- Increasing funding for environmental stewardship programs for farms, focusing on regional conservation challenges in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and advancing further funding and administrative support for the environmental quality incentives program and farmers across the state. Pennsylvania's nation-leading farmland preservation program would also benefit with changes that will allow greater program flexibility; and
- Providing funding support for forestry issues and pest management programs, such as combating invasive species, providing tax credits to help slow the loss of critical forested watershed, and introducing the community forest and open space conservation program, which provides cost-sharing support for acquiring community forests and open space.

This week, state Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff shared Gov. Rendell's recommendations on the Farm Bill when he met with other agricultural leaders at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture 2008 Midyear Conference and with Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation.

[A copy of Gov. Rendell's letter is available online.](#)

Delaware River Watershed Education Youth Eco-Leadership Summit April 20-22

The 15th Annual [Delaware River Watershed Education Youth Eco-Leadership Summit](#) will be held April 20-22 at the Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pa.

The Watershed Education Summit is a regional / basin-wide gathering of students, teachers, and resource personnel, designed to be a educational and networking experience for all students studying the Delaware Watershed and participants in the Bureau of State Parks' Watershed Education Program.

The Summit historically has encompassed a wide variety of experiences. Students participate in a field trip with both educational and interpretative sections. A selection of workshops designed to enhance field technique as well as knowledge base are offered.

Separate forums are developed to introduce a variety of issues, from local to global. Most importantly the students are given a venue to share their Watershed Education projects, presenting their projects and network with other students who may be facing the same challenges in their watersheds.

The registration deadline is April 7.

More information, visit the [Youth Summit webpage](#).

Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference, Shad Symposium Set for March 28

The Wildlands Conservancy, Lehigh County Conservation District, Fish and Boat Commission and other partners will hold the 2008 [Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium](#) on March 28 at the Holiday Inn in Fogelsville, Pa.

The conference will bring together watershed groups, municipal officials, educators, scientists, technical experts, agencies, industry representatives and the public to discuss effective ways to clean up watershed, forge partnership and maximize the resources in the Lehigh Valley.

A special Shad Symposium will also be held in conjunction with the Conference to address topics of interest in the restoration of the American Shad to the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers.

PA Environment Digest – Crisci Associates

Significant sponsorship opportunities are available.

For more information, visit the [Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium webpage](#) or contact Rebecca Kennedy, Lehigh County Conservation District at 610-391-9583, ext. 18 or send email to: rkennedy@lehighconservation.org.

Teachers Invited to Workshop on Acid Mine Drainage in PA

Middle and high school teachers are invited to a three-day program to learn about the issues, causes and effects of abandoned mine drainage in Pennsylvania at the [Jennings Environmental Education Center](#) in Slippery Rock, Pa on March 29, April 12 and May 17.

The workshop, which meets the state Environment and Ecology Standards, introduces the topics of the history of coal mining, technologies currently used to treat acid mine drainage at the local, state and national level.

Teachers participating in this course will be given the tools to bring this topic into the classroom through handouts, activities, discussion and field trips that include the Tour Ed mine, an active limestone quarry and reclamation sites.

There is a \$130 registration fee, but participants will be given a stipend of \$80, along with books, materials and Act 48 credits.

The workshop is funded by the Department of Environmental Protection Environmental Education Grants Program.

For more details, contact Wil Taylor at 724-794-6011 or send email to: wilbutaylo@state.pa.us.

DEP Lifts Drought Watch in All Pennsylvania Counties

The Department of Environmental Protection this week lifted the [drought watch](#) declaration for the last 20 counties meaning all of Pennsylvania is now considered to have normal ground and surface water levels.

The drought watch was lifted today in Adams, Berks, Bucks, Cambia, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Cumberland, Dauphin, Elk, Franklin, Juniata, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Perry, Potter, Schuylkill and Union counties.

“While some public water suppliers are still calling for customers to restrict their water use based on their individual system needs, conditions overall have improved so that there is no longer a need for a county-wide conservation effort,” said DEP Secretary Kathleen McGinty. “We would point out, though, that conserving water is always prudent.”

A drought watch was first declared in 58 counties last August following weeks of below-normal rainfall that resulted in precipitation deficits of as much as 4 inches in some counties.

For more information, visit the [Drought Information Center webpage](#).

PA CleanWays Coastal Cleanups in 2007 Net Over 9 Tons of Junk



[PA CleanWays](#) and its partners participated in the International Coastal Cleanups in September 2007 that resulted in collecting over 9 tons of illegally dumped items in the Delaware Estuary.

The cleanups were organized by PA CleanWays, Verizon

Telecom Pioneer, Coastal Zone Management Program, Montgomery County Conservation District, Plymouth Township Parks and Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Green Valleys Association with F.A.C.E of the Pickering, and the Lower Merion High School Environmental Club and local volunteers.

A total of 120 volunteers worked at various cleanup sites throughout the southeast region to remove the illegally dumped items and trash. Volunteers hand picked trash and assisted the Philadelphia Water Department to remove large items from local waterways.

Debris and litter are more than an eyesore; these items are dangerous to humans and wildlife. Plastics, plastic strapping, and six-pack holders can strangle and endanger wildlife or can be ingested and cause damage to internal organs and intestinal blockage which can be fatal. Scientists estimate that more than one million birds and 100,000 marine mammals and sea turtles die each year as a result of entanglement or ingestion of litter and debris, according to The Ocean Conservancy.

The [International Coastal Cleanup](#) is the world's largest single-day volunteer effort to improve the health of the world's lakes, streams, rivers, and coastal and marine environments for both humans and wildlife.

PA CleanWays coordinates cleanups in the southeast region of Pennsylvania, working with the statewide ICC Day coordinator, Leni Herr, and local groups to promote the world wide cleanup event.

The 2008 International Coastal Cleanup will be held in September again this year.

For more information, contact Michelle Dunn, PA CleanWays, at 1-877-772-3673 ext 37 or send email to: mdunn@pacleanways.org.

NewsClip: [Pa CleanWays Looking for Help](#)

PA AWWA Sponsors The Chlorine Security Summit March 19

The PA Chapter American Waterworks Association will sponsor [The Chlorine Security Summit](#) on March 19 in Hamarville, near Pittsburgh.

The Summit will outline the potential security issues surrounding chlorine storage at water treatment facilities and present potential solutions.

Participants will receive continuing education credit from the Department of Environmental Protection for the program.

[Registration information is available online](#) or for more information, contact Mike Snyder at 717-774-8870 or send email to: mikesnyder@paawwa.org.

Children, Nature, Wellness: Open the Door to Learning Conference Call for Papers

The [Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children](#) is now inviting proposals for presentations at the October 25 Conference – “Children, Nature and Wellness: Open the Door to Learning.” Proposals are due March 31.

Why the topic “Children, Nature and Wellness: Open the Door to Learning”?

Natural green spaces for children are giving way to development at an alarming rate. Parents with time constraints and media coverage of safety issues that cause concern translate into less free time outdoors to freely explore, discover, and play. But, contact with nature can be as beneficial to young children as good nutrition and sleeping well (YC, 2008). Nurturing children's interests in the natural world can contribute to their health and well-being and benefit them for the rest of their lives.

The theme-related areas that will be addressed at the Conference are: Nature and Outdoors, Health and Wellness, Sharing Nature with Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers and Play.

In addition, participants will learn about current research and address issues in higher education, professional development programs, public policy, advocacy, program administration, leadership and more!

For more information, [download the full Request for Proposals](#) from the PAEYC website.

Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour Comes to Allentown on March 2



Join [Wildlands Conservancy](#) when the [Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour](#) brings the spirit of outdoor adventure to the Lehigh Valley, at the auditorium at Parkland Senior High School on March 2 at 6 p.m.

All net proceeds benefit Wildlands Conservancy.

Hot on the heels of the largest, and one of the most prestigious, mountain festivals in the world, the Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour has hit the road, with stops planned in more than 275 communities and 30 countries across the globe.

This year's tour features a collection of the most inspiring and thought-provoking action, environmental, and adventure mountain films. Traveling from remote landscapes and cultures to up close and personal with adrenaline-packed action sports, the 2007/2008 World Tour is an exhilarating and provocative exploration of the mountain world.

The Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour is produced by Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre, and features award-winning films and audience favorites from approximately 300 films entered in the annual festival in Banff.

Tickets are available at Nestor's Sporting Goods and Wildlands Conservancy in Emmaus. Prices are \$12 for adults (in advance), \$15 at the door; \$10 for students with a valid high school or college I.D; \$8 for children ages 12 and under.

For tickets and information contact Wildlands Conservancy at 610-965-4397 ext. 26.

Commonwealth Honored With National Award From Travel Writers



Gov. Rendell this week said the Commonwealth is honored that the [Pennsylvania Wilds initiative](#) is receiving the national Phoenix Award from the [Society of American Travel Writers](#).

The award is one of four being made in recognition of major conservation and preservation efforts

throughout the world.

"The Pennsylvania Wilds is truly a unique model of how to blend tourism, economic development and protection of our natural resources to help communities revitalize and, at the same time, offer visitors an authentic outdoor experience," Gov. Rendell said. "Our investments and work with many partners over the last several years are

helping the region move toward becoming a top destination for nature tourism, while always remaining sensitive to protecting the region's rich and diverse natural assets."

The Pennsylvania Wilds covers Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga and Warren counties. It includes 29 state parks and 1.5 million acres of state forest and game lands, the Allegheny National Forest, Pine Creek Gorge, the largest elk herd in the northeast United States and the darkest nighttime skies at Cherry Springs State Park.

The estimated total number of leisure visitors to the Pennsylvania Wilds increased from 3.5 million to 3.9 million from 2004 to 2006.

"In my seven years as a member of the Phoenix Awards Committee, few nominees have received unanimous approval," said Peggy Bendel, chairwoman of the Phoenix Award Committee while presenting a plaque at a meeting today of the Governor's Task Force on the Pennsylvania Wilds in Harrisburg. "The Pennsylvania Wilds was one of the few to do so, and it is a particular pleasure to present this award today."

"The project involves unprecedented cooperation between several state agencies, as well as a unique partnership between state and local organizations," said Ed Wetschler, a journalist/nominator whose story in the New York Times reflected his impressions of the region. "No other initiative exists in the country on this scale and level of strategic thinking. The little hotels and restaurants, shops and diversions in this vast area are still locally owned, and this remains a rural region free of urban sprawl - a place of forests and friendly, small-town people, giving it a sense of place in the very best sense."

The Society of American Travel Writers is North America's largest association of travel writers, editors and public relations professionals.

For more information, visit the [Pennsylvania Wilds webpage](#).

Game Commission's Howard Nursery Offers Trees to Improve Wildlife Habitat

Landowners seeking to plant trees beneficial to wildlife are encouraged to begin making plans now and the Game Commission can help through the [Howard Nursery Seedling Program](#).

The Game Commission's Howard Nursery produces bare-root seedlings for wildlife food and cover on State Game Lands. The nursery has been producing and distributing 2.7 to 6 million seedlings annually for wildlife food and cover since 1954.

Landowners who have land open to public hunting and are enrolled in one of the Commission's public access programs are eligible to receive up to 500 free seedlings annually, as available.

Those enrolled cooperators with more than 500 acres are eligible for one free seedling per acre enrolled up to a maximum of 10,000 seedlings annually, as available. Cooperators are provided an order form each fall for following spring delivery.

Free seedling orders are only taken in the fall through local Wildlife Conservation Officers and Land Management Group Supervisors. Those re-signing in these programs this winter will have one more opportunity to order thru their local WCO/LMGS.

All Pennsylvania landowners may purchase seedlings for wildlife food and cover, watershed protection, soil erosion control, and for reclamation of disturbed areas, such as surface mine site and utility right-of-ways.

"The goal of the Howard Nursery is to provide the finest tree seedlings available of those species that best provide for the various needs of wildlife, including food and

shelter," said Cliff Guindon, Howard Nursery superintendent. "All of our stock is inspected annually by the state Department of Agriculture and certified to be disease-free."

Guindon noted that the nursery provides landowners the ability to purchase seedlings for 15 to 50 cents each in bundles of 25 (plus sales tax). The following species remain available for this spring: Eastern white pine; mugo pine; red pine; Norway spruce; white spruce; Colorado blue spruce; arborvitae (northern white cedar); silky dogwood; black locust; Northern red oak; pin oak; Chinese chestnut; buttonbush; American sweet crabapple; assorted crabapple; Washington Hawthorne; American mountain ash; common elderberry; common alder; and trembling aspen.

A description of each, along with size information, is available on the website. Some of the new native shrubs are available in limited quantities and are expected to sell out quickly. The selection of native trees and shrubs is being expanded annually. With the exception of black locust, all of our hardwoods are grown from seed collected and processed by Game Commission personnel from Pennsylvania sources.

In addition to making arrangements for landowners to pick up their seedling orders, the nursery does ship via United Parcel Service. Shipping and handling charges do apply. This is very efficient and most orders are received next day. Orders are only shipped Monday thru Wednesday to assure delivery for weekend planting.

"Due to conditions beyond our control, such as ice and snow, wet weather, frozen ground, we may not be able to ship trees as early as we would like," Guindon said. "We will do everything we can do at the nursery to ensure timely shipping and arrival of trees." Generally seedlings ship in the month of April.

For more information, contact Cliff Guindon at the Howard Nursery, 197 Nursery Road, Howard, PA 16841, telephone 814-355-4434. Hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Wildlife For Everyone Foundation Donates Berks County Land

The [Wildlife For Everyone Endowment Foundation](#) announced that Boyd and Sheila Sponaugle of Lancaster, Pa, have generously donated 20.14 acres of land in Upper Tulpehocken Township, Berks County to the Foundation.

This land donation will augment the Foundation's mission to increase wildlife habitat.

The Foundation has turned this land over to the Game Commission to become part of State Game Lands #110. These public lands serve as critical habitat for wildlife which provide hunting and trapping, and wild places for wildlife. "We are very proud to make this donation to the Foundation" said Boyd and Shelia Sponaugle.

The Wildlife For Everyone Endowment Foundation was established to provide permanent private support for the wildlife habitat enhancement, wildlife research and education, land preservation, and for the establishment of a Wildlife Research and Education Center in State College.

Farmland Preservation Board OKs \$74.2 Million Preservation Investment

Pennsylvania will continue to be the national leader in farmland preservation thanks to a joint state and county investment of \$15.1 million to preserve 5,391 acres of farmland in 23 counties.

The Farmland Preservation Board granted the approvals this week, said Agriculture Secretary Dennis Wolff.

"By joining with counties and local municipalities to preserve valuable farmland, future generations can continue to enjoy the rich tradition and economic impact of production agriculture in Pennsylvania," said Secretary Wolff. "As the state's number one industry, every measure must be taken to keep agriculture growing, for the benefit of our producers and consumers."

Pennsylvania has preserved 382,845 acres on 3,450 farms since the program began in 1988.

"To help celebrate the program's 20th anniversary, we anticipate reaching the 3,500-farm and 400,000-acre milestones this year," added Secretary Wolff.

The Farmland Preservation Board also approved a \$33 million investment in the preservation program. County programs will contribute \$41.2 million in matching funds to protect quality farmland from development and non-agricultural uses. This \$74.2 million in combined funds can preserve an additional 37,000 acres or more than 300 farms, the fourth highest program total in history.

The latest preserved farms are in 23 counties: Armstrong, Berks, Blair, Centre, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Erie, Franklin, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Schuylkill, Snyder, Washington, Wayne, Westmoreland and York. Currently, 57 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties are participating in the program.

The state's farmland preservation program works through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, which was developed 20 years ago to help slow the loss of prime farmland to non-agricultural uses. The program enables state, county and local governments to purchase conservation easements, also called development rights, from owners of quality farmland.

For more information, visit the [Department of Agriculture's Producers webpage](#).

Guidebook to PA Environmental Laws and Regulations Now Available

The 2008-09 [Guidebook to Pennsylvania Environmental Laws and Regulations](#) is now available from the PA Chamber of Business and Industry.

Written by leading experts in the field, including former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Protection inspectors and officers, the Pennsylvania Chamber's 2008/2009 Guidebook On Pennsylvania Environmental Laws and Regulations is a step-by-step comprehensive working resource designed to help easily determine which environmental regulations apply at your facility, and find and implement the compliance strategies that work.

Over 200 pages, the Guidebook combines practical strategies and detailed compliance information on the major environmental compliance areas: residual and hazardous waste; clean air; water; SPCC plans; underground and aboveground storage tanks; and surviving DEP and EPA inspections.

The Guidebook is \$70 for Pennsylvania Chamber members and \$80 for non-members, plus tax (where applicable). [You may order online](#); call 877 866-8965; or send email to: lhines@pachamber.org

BioEnergy International Breaks Ground on PA's 1st Ethanol Plant in Clearfield

[BioEnergy International](#) this week broke ground for the Bionol Clearfield LLC, 100 million gallon per year corn ethanol biorefinery in Clearfield, Pa.

"Today, we not only have the responsibility to transform our economy away from fossil fuels -- but with ethanol -- we have the ability to do so," said Stephen J. Gatto, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BioEnergy. "Our integrated corn to cellulose program in Clearfield provides America with an extraordinary opportunity to change how we derive our fuels based economy. The partnership between business and government is flourishing in Pennsylvania as embodied by the extraordinary efforts of Gov. Rendell, DCNR Secretary Yablonsky, DEP Secretary McGinty and their exceptional staffs."

"With partners like BioEnergy, Pennsylvania stands at the forefront of developing renewable energy to free us from dependence on foreign sources," Gov. Rendell said. "Not only will BioEnergy's production of 100 million gallons of fuel-grade ethanol help us to break the grip of foreign oil producers, but it will create new markets for Pennsylvania's farmers and protect the environment."

"Shovels in the ground mean jobs, energy and a \$265 million investment in Clearfield County," Rep. Bud George (D-Clearfield) said. "It is not just dirt being moved forward but a bright future for BioEnergy, Clearfield County and Pennsylvania -- a future of innovation, independence and home-grown energy."

The corn and cellulosic pilot plants to be built in Clearfield are core to BioEnergy's mission of integrating the development of novel biocatalysts for use in innovative, state-of-the-art biorefineries. Guided by a strategic business model and supported by proprietary technology, BioEnergy is a responsible leader in the new industrial revolution.

"Expanding the production and use of domestic renewable energy sources is vital to the long term economic, energy and environmental security of this nation," said Renewable Fuels Association President Bob Dinneen.

"Renewable fuels like ethanol offer this nation an immediate opportunity to begin the hard work of mitigating the impacts of climate change, developing greater energy independence and creating jobs and economic opportunity at time when the economy faces significant challenges. The U.S. ethanol industry stands eager to join with Pennsylvanians and the people at BioEnergy International to help meet the energy and environmental challenges this country faces."

Ground Broken on \$100 Million Solar Manufacturing Project in Bucks County

[AE Polysilicon](#) this week broke ground at the Bucks County's Keystone International Port Complex for a \$100 million plant that will manufacture high-purity polysilicon used in the solar power industry.

Along with the manufacturing facility that is to be housed on the 32-acre parcel, the company plans to create 145 jobs, with another 60-plus construction and contract workers needed over the next year.

"Global demand for clean energy and solar power in particular is booming; however, limited supplies of polysilicon has restrained the industry's ability to mass produce affordable solar cells and modules," said AE Polysilicon founder and President Dr. York Tsuo. "It is our vision to advance the competitiveness of the global solar energy industry by using cost-effective production technology. We are very excited to locate in

Pennsylvania, with its strong commitment to developing a clean energy economy and its skilled workforce. Our product is the basic building block for the solar energy industry. We expect downstream manufacturers and solar projects to follow us to Pennsylvania.”

AE Polysilicon will help fill a supply void in the solar industry. The company will manufacture polysilicon, which is the raw material used to produce the solar cells and modules that convert solar energy into electricity. Currently there are less than 10 polysilicon manufacturers in the world.

“Right now, the high cost of solar power makes it prohibitive to many homeowners and business owners,” said Secretary McGinty. “While we continue pushing the Governor’s proposal for solar rebates, having new companies like AE Polysilicon enter the market will help increase supplies of a very important component to solar panels; improve the economies of scale and efficiencies. Together, this will drive down prices making solar technology more affordable for everyone.”

The Governor’s Action Team coordinated an \$8.2 million funding package for AE Polysilicon, with the Bucks County Economic Development Corporation as sponsor. The new facility will be located in a Keystone Opportunity Improvement Zone. KOIZs work to develop a community’s abandoned, unused, underutilized land and buildings into business districts.

Pennsylvania Has 103 Buildings Meeting EPA’s Energy Star Standards

Pennsylvania now has 103 [Energy Star](#)-qualified buildings represent approximately 15.7 million square feet of space that save an estimated \$1.5 billion annually in lower energy bills, while meeting industry standards for comfort and indoor air quality.

These buildings also prevent 497.6 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to the emissions from more than 41,348 vehicles.

[A complete list of buildings is available online.](#)

Finding energy efficient schools, supermarkets, offices, and other facilities throughout the country has become even easier for Americans interested in being green. Now they can find the Energy Star not only where they live but where they work, shop, play and learn.

The number of commercial buildings and manufacturing plants to earn the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star for superior energy efficiency is up by more than 25 percent in the past year, and the amount of carbon dioxide emissions reduced has reached an all-time high of more than 25 billion pounds.

Across the U.S., 4,056 office buildings, schools, hospitals, and public buildings, representing 746.6 million square feet, have earned EPA’s Energy Star for superior energy and environmental performance, including 1,400 in 2007 alone.

These buildings are saving an estimated \$1.5 billion annually in lower energy bills, as Energy Star-qualified buildings use up to 40 percent less energy than typical buildings, while providing the required comfort and services.

“By partnering with EPA, building owners are realizing that they can reduce energy costs without sacrificing comfort or tenant satisfaction,” said EPA Regional Administrator Donald S. Welsh. “Energy Star building owners in Pennsylvania are to be congratulated for taking an important leadership step.”

Buildings earn the Energy Star based on EPA’s energy performance rating system. These buildings must score a 75 or better (on a scale from 1-100) based on their actual

energy use, and also meet industry standards for comfort and indoor air quality. The average score for Energy Star labeled buildings in 2007 is 84.

Buildings that earn the prestigious Energy Star use one-third less energy than other buildings. Among the top performers nationally are 1,500 office buildings, 1,300 supermarkets, 820 K-12 public schools and 250 hotels. Also, more than 185 banks, financial centers, hospitals, courthouses, warehouses, dormitories, and - for the first time - big-box retail buildings earned the Energy Star. More than 35 manufacturing plants such as cement, auto assembly, corn refining, and - for the first time - petroleum refining are also being recognized.

With interest in energy efficiency growing, Energy Star offers easy-to-use tools and guidelines that can help building owners and managers in the U.S. realize significant energy and dollar savings.

For more information, visit the [Energy Star webpage](#).

Help Wanted: PRC Environmental Education Coordinator

The [Pennsylvania Resources Council](#) is seeking a full/part-time Environmental Education Coordinator to lead PRC's team of environmental educators at its Newtown Square facility, near Philadelphia.

Responsibilities include development, marketing, scheduling, supervision and implementation of classroom and field trip programs, teacher training and community outreach. Qualifications: B.S./B.A. in Education, Environmental Science, Ecology or related program and 5 years experience required. Advanced degree or graduate course work in related programs preferred.

Salary range mid-\$30K, according to experience; benefits package. Send resumes to PRC, 3606 Providence Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073 or send email to: vancielief@prc.org .

Spotlight

Effects of Nitrate Deposition on Wildlife and Humans

By
Judith Y. Aker

Nitrate deposition in our nation's waterways is suspected of impacting human and wildlife health. Scientists are showing interest in nitrate impacts due to unexplained wildlife population declines and disappearances. Along with population declines are developmental changes in amphibians.

Researchers have noted that amphibians are good indicators of ecosystem change. Changes have been seen in the endocrine systems of amphibians which affect their ability to reproduce. If amphibian health is affected by nitrates, it is possible that human health may be also be impacted by nitrates.

Nitrate is found in all ecosystems in a natural state. It is also in most fertilizers, manure and liquid wastes from septic tanks. Nitrogen occurs naturally in soil and becomes nitrate through bacterial action. Humans influence nitrate deposition through land use practices such as farming, urban sprawl and urban development.

Agriculture contributes to nitrate production through use of pesticides, fertilizers, manure and concentrated livestock operations. Increased fertilizer usage has greatly escalated nitrogen deposition into the waterways. The mandated amount of nitrate allowable in water for public health safety is 10mg/L ppm (parts per million). Nitrate produces changes in metabolism, mortality and endocrine functions in wildlife species.

Nitrate impacts vary with different species of wildlife. Increased nitrate levels cause increased mortality of Chinook salmon and Rainbow trout. Amphibian risk of nitrate is highest in the egg and tadpole development stages. High nitrate toxicity has been shown to affect fish and amphibian eggs. Metabolic effects of nitrate speed up metamorphosis from tadpoles to toads as compared with those not impacted by nitrates.

These same toads exhibited unusual swimming patterns and deformations. It was also noticed that these creatures swim less and did not eat as much. The presence of nitrate in water and foods is suspect of causing some diseases and cancers in humans.

Nitrate consumption by pregnant women shows a probable connection to miscarriages and birth defects. Blue baby syndrome is brought about in infants through this contaminant's consumption. Some researchers believe diseases such as Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, gastric cancer and hypertension are linked to nitrates in drinking water. Other suspect diseases include reduced sperm count, breast, testicular and prostate cancers. With all of this evidence, governmental legislation has been instituted to address the nitrate deposition issue.

Concern over the effects of nutrient deposition in Pennsylvania led to the enactment of the Pennsylvania Nutrient Management (Act 38 of 2005) Program. The bill was enacted on July 6, 2005. This act contained stipulations regarding reviews of local ordinances and nutrient management. It is designed to protect and sustain agricultural operations and other farm products. This act also allows local government to protect the health, safety and well-being of its population.

Other agricultural regulations in this bill are the distance from a body of water that manure can be applied to a field and use of buffers. Nutrient management certification programs are to be developed by a certified individual under the auspices of the Chesapeake Bay Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement Program and the United States Department of Agriculture's Water Quality Improvement Projects Program.

In addition to government policies regarding nutrient issues, there are other methods that farmers may use to lessen nitrate effects on the environment. An effective way to reduce nutrient runoff is by planting a winter cover crop and spraying with an herbicide before the spring planting.

Plants take up the excess nitrogen, store it and when it is killed, the stored nutrients are put back into the soil. Another measure is by spreading manure on ground that has at least 25 percent crop residue or that already has an established cover crop. Nutrient management plans can be devised for individual farms through local county conservation districts.

A nutrient trading policy is another method introduced by Gov. Rendell. This strategy will help farmers, communities and industry meet and go beyond state and federal water quality goals. Pennsylvania is one of the first states to use this strategy for water quality. Market-based programs provide a means by which trading environmental credits help other areas meet their obligations or goals.

Judith Y. Aker has a degree in Geography from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is a member of the Indiana County PA Senior Environment Corps. She can be contact by sending email to: judith813@pa.net .

Feature

New Online Guide to PA's Forbes Trail Features History, Outdoor Recreation



A new website takes visitors into the world of young George Washington and the 1758 Forbes Expedition, then provides them with tools to experience that world today, its history and recreational opportunities, on the Forbes Trail that stretches from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

The [new Forbes Trail website](#) was launched this week as part of the commemoration of the 250th anniversaries of the Forbes Trail and the French and Indian War.

The Forbes Trail stretches from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, primarily along Route 30. The corridor along the trail is home to a rich collection of historic sites spanning more than 250 years of American history, as well as a wide array of outdoor recreation.

Visitors to the website will find lively history and illustrations. Travel tools include interactive maps with easy access to details on 80 historic sites and 24 state parks, an interactive trip planner, and a calendar of Forbes Trail anniversary events.

The site features seven gateways: Philadelphia, Lancaster, Carlisle, Fort Loudoun, Bedford, Ligonier and Pittsburgh. The final four trace their origins to the Forbes Expedition and also celebrate 250th anniversaries in 2008.

George Washington's participation is a fascinating part of the Forbes Trail story.

The trail was carved into the Pennsylvania wilderness in 1758 by 6,000 British and colonial troops commanded by British General John Forbes. The expedition was a turning point in the French and Indian War, resulting in the capture of the French stronghold, Fort Duquesne (at the site of modern-day Pittsburgh).

The headstrong 26-year-old Washington, a colonel with the Virginia troops, first caught General Forbes' attention by strenuously but unsuccessfully arguing against the route Forbes had selected across Pennsylvania. He later distinguished himself in battle, nearly losing his life fending off a French attack on Fort Ligonier; his First Virginia Regiment was among the first to reach Fort Duquesne. This was the last of his French and Indian War experiences, and added to his growing reputation as a military leader.

The Forbes Trail website was developed by [French and Indian War 250, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization spearheading the national commemoration of the French and Indian War. The website and a historical travel guidebook to be released May 15, also are part of the celebration of [Pittsburgh's 250th anniversary](#).

[PA Environment Digest Video Blog](#)

Grants & Awards

This section gives you a heads up on upcoming deadlines for grants and financial assistance as well as nominations for awards and other recognition programs. **NEW** means from last week—

- **February 19** – PennVEST [Infrastructure Loans/Grants for April 15 Meeting](#).
- **February 20**— [USDA Conservation Innovation Grants](#)
- **February 22**— [Allegheny County Global Warming Poster Contest](#)
- **February 22**— [Clean Water Begins and Ends With You Student Art Contest](#)
- **February 29**— [Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants](#)
- **February 29**— [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Grants](#)
- **February 29--** [Schuylkill River Heritage Area Regular Grants](#)
- **March 12**— [PEC Western PA Environmental Awards](#)
- **March 17**— [Community Action for a Renewed Environment Grants](#)
- **March 31** – PAEP [Karl Mason Environmental Award](#).
- **March 31**—[DEP Host Municipality Inspector Grants](#)
- **March 31**—[Pa CleanWays Litter Hawk Youth Award Program](#)
- **April 1**— [Write On! Wetlands Challenge Student Competition](#)
- **April 2** – [WREN Water Resources Education Project Grants](#)
- **April 4**— [Schuylkill River Heritage Area Mini-Grants](#)
- **April 25**— DCNR [Community Conservation Partnerships Program Grants](#)
- **May 1**— [PA CleanWays' Sue Wiseman Student Scholarship](#)
- **May 20** – PennVEST [Infrastructure Loans/Grants for April 15 Meeting](#).
- **June 20**— DEP [Section 902 Recycling Development Grants](#)

[Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

Quick Clips

Here's a selection of NewsClips on environmental topics from around the state

[Editorial: New Analysis of Biofuels Questions Value as State Investment](#)

[Allegheny Air Quality Chief to Step Down](#)

[DEP Recognizes PA's Radon Poster Contest Winner in Pittsburgh](#)

[Editorial: Truck Idling Restrictions Would Give Relief From Pollution](#)

[Editorial: No More Sitting in Idle, Please](#)

[Like It Or Not, Global Warming Is Beginning to Hit Close to Home](#)

[Secretary McGinty on Climate Issues, E&E TV](#)

[DuBois Looking at Energy Efficiency Steps](#)

[Going Green Is Going to Cost a Lot of Green](#)

[Clearfield Equipment Refurbisher Reduces Pollution With New Paint System](#)

[Editorial: Make Coal a Key Part of Energy Policy](#)

[PSU Biodiesel Exploration Effective](#)

[University Recycling Looking Up: Ceiling Tiles Find New Use](#)

[State Parks Going Without Life Guards at Beaches](#)
[Editorial: Western PA Conservancy, Nature's Friend](#)
[Schuylkill Plan Urges Growth Limits](#)
[Effort Launched to Raise Funds for Pittsburgh Parks](#)
[DCNR Longwall Mining Lawsuit a First](#)
[DEP Awards \\$1.4 Million in Recycling Coordinator Grants](#)
[Pa CleanWays Looking for Help](#)

Watershed NewsClips

Read a sampling of NewsClips on watershed topics from around Pennsylvania.

[Groups Push Funding to Revive Polluted Waterways](#)
[Senate Calls for Study of Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Costs](#)
[West Branch Susquehanna Restoration Projects Now Under Way](#)
[Lock Haven Bills to Skyrocket Under Chesapeake Bay Requirements](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Funding Sought](#)
[Chesapeake Bay Sticker Shock](#)
[Plants to Keep Nutrients at Bay, But Cost a Concern](#)
[State Asked to Fund Sewer Plant Upgrades](#)
[Passing the Buck on Water Quality](#)
[Chesapeake Sticker Shock](#)
[Danville Challenges Sewer Upgrade Requirements](#)
[New Bucks Conservation District Chief Focuses on Education, Watersheds](#)
[Dam Repair Ranks High on Rendell's Must-Do List](#)
[Infrastructure Concerns Can Be "Damning"](#)
[Rebuilt Dam to Revive Fishing Spot](#)
[Wittlinger Dam Removal on Yellow Breeches](#)
[Winter Storm Boosts Drought Recovery Efforts](#)
[Susquehanna River's Potential Unrealized Group Says](#)
[Despite Plant Fixes, Sewage Still Spilling Into Yough](#)

Regulations

Department of Environmental Protection published an updated list of certified radon contractors ([Pa Bulletin page 938](#)).

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – February 16, 2008](#)

Comment Deadlines: [Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations \(DEP website\)](#)

[Status of Regulations, 6-Month Calendar \(DEP website\)](#)

Technical Guidance & Permits

The State Conservation Commission [published notice](#) of its conservation district fund allocation policy.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

[For copies of Final Technical Guidance \(DEP website\)](#)

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Upcoming conferences, meetings, workshops, plus links to other online calendars. Meetings are in Harrisburg unless otherwise noted. **NEW** indicates new from last week. [Go To: PA Environment Digest Calendar Page](#)

- [Revised Meeting Schedule for DEP Certification Program Advisory Committee](#)
- [Revised Meeting Schedule for Water, Wastewater Systems Operators Board](#)
- **Watch budget hearings on PCN on cable or [online through your computer](#).**
- **February 19**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Agriculture. Room 140. 2:00. **(PCN Live Coverage)**
- **February 20**—**CANCELLED**. [DEP Agricultural Advisory Board](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting is April 16
- **February 21**— **Location**. Senate Republican Policy Committee hearing on the Costs of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy. Room 8E-A East Wing. 10:00
- **February 21**—**CANCELLED**. [DEP Statewide Water Resources Committee](#) meeting. Next scheduled meeting March 20.
- **February 22-23** – 2008 [Keystone Coldwater Conference](#). State College.
- **February 25**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Public Utility Commission. Room 140. 9:00.
- **February 25**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – PEMA, Homeland Security, Fire Commissioner. Room 140. 10:00.
- **February 25**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Budget Secretary. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 3:00. **(PCN Live Coverage)**
- **February 26**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Insurance. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 10:30.
- **February 26**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Community and Economic Development. Room 140. 2:00. **(PCN Live Coverage)**
- **February 26**—[PA Chamber Energy Summit](#). Harrisburg Hilton.
- **February 27**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Transportation. Room 140. 9:00.
- **February 27**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Office of Consumer Advocate and Small Business Advocate. Room 140. 1:00.
- **February 27**—**NEW**. [DCNR Conservation and Natural Resources Council](#) meeting. Room 105 Rachel Carson Building. 10:00.

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- **February 28**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Agriculture. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 9:00. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **February 28**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Health. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 10:30. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **February 28**—[Pennsylvania Wild Resources Symposium](#). [Powdermill Nature Reserve](#). Pittsburgh.
- **February 28-March 2**—[PA Assn. of Environmental Educators Conference](#). Antiochian Village Camp and Conference Center near Ligonier, Pa.
- **March 1-2**— [Schuylkill Watershed Congress](#). Montgomery County Community College, Pottstown.
- **March 3**—House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Environmental Protection. Room 140. 9:00.
- **March 3**— House Appropriations Committee budget hearing – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Room 140. 10:00.
- **March 3**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Environmental Protection. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 3:00.
- **March 3**— [2008 Philadelphia Sustainability Awards Program](#). Philadelphia Flower Show.
- **March 4**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 9:00. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **March 4**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Transportation. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 1:15. (PCN Live Coverage)
- **March 6**— Senate Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing – Department of Community and Economic Development. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 1:15.
- **March 6**—House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee holds a hearing on [House Bill 1989](#) (Wansacz-D-Luzerne) establishing the PA Flood Grant and Assistance Program. Council Chamber, Scranton. 10:00.
- **March 8**— [Southeast PA Environmental Advisory Council Conference](#). Villanova University, Villanova.
- **March 11**— Senate Game and Fisheries Committee information meeting on the Game Commission's Deer Management Program. Hearing Room 1, North Office Building. 11:00.
- **March 17**—**NEW**. House Republican Policy Committee hearing on electric rate cap mitigation. Room G-50 Irvis Building. 10:30.
- **March 19**— Capital Region Water Board Meeting. Susquehanna River Basin Commission Building. 1:00. Contact: Cindy Rock, Cindy.L.Rock@comcast.net or call 717-633-7959.
- **March 28**— Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference and Shad Symposium. Holiday Inn, Fogelsville. Information, send email to: rkennedy@lehighconservation.org .
- **March 29**— [PennFuture's Annual Watershed Conference](#). Chadd's Ford.
- **April 1-2**— The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry 2008 [Environmental Regulations & Technologies Conference](#). Eden Resort Inn & Suites, Lancaster.
- **April 17**— Sewage Task Force, [Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) meeting. Penn Stater, State College. 10:00.

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- **April 18**—PEC [Water Trail Working Session Conference](#).
- **April 19**— Protecting Our Headwaters Streams and Wetlands-What You Can Do. Cedar Crest College, Allentown. 10:00-3:00. Contact: Barbara Benson, 610-282-33611 or send email to: barbarabenson@bensonsails.com .
- **May 13-15**—[PA Water/Wastewater Association](#) annual conference. Valley Forge.
- **May 28**— [Western Pennsylvania Environmental Awards Program](#). Pittsburgh.

DEP Calendar of Events

Environmental Education Workshop/Training Calendar

(courtesy [PA Center for Environmental Education](#))

Senate Committee Schedule House Committee Schedule

You can watch the [Senate Floor Session](#) and [House Floor Session](#) live online.

Helpful Web Links

PA Environment Digest Video Blog

Daily NewsClips Daily DEP Update GreenTreks Network

DEP Press Releases DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas

DCNR Resource Magazine DCNR Press Releases

Fish & Boat Commission Press Releases Game Commission Press Releases

Stories Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - DHess@CrisciAssociates.com or go to www.PaEnvironmentDigest.com .

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