

PA Environment Digest

An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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DEP Secretary Takes Steps To End 10-Year Information Drought

The Department of Environmental Protection Tuesday announced a new public participation and education initiative to improve its outreach to the public and more actively engage citizens and the regulated community in the development of policies and regulations.

The DEP announcement came during the monthly meeting of the [Citizen's Advisory Council](#) where Acting DEP Secretary Chris Abruzzo thanked members of the CAC for their valuable input and commitment to helping the department improve public participation.

"The work of our agency is technical in nature, guided by a complex regulatory process," Abruzzo said. "When Gov. Corbett took office, he challenged all state agencies to become more open, efficient and transparent."

"The goal of this initiative is to help people more easily navigate how we operate and, more importantly, highlight opportunities where they can become active participants in helping us shape environmental decisions, processes and policies," he said.

DEP has created an all-new, online [Public Participation Center](#), which is a clearinghouse for all information related to DEP meetings, [webinars](#) and a [Calendar of Events](#), as well as proposals posted for public comment.

The online center includes an educational component where visitors can learn about: [technical guidance and policies](#); [the rulemaking process](#); and the electronic tools available to track permit applications or to be notified of pending authorizations.

It also includes a link to the updated [Citizen's Guide to DEP Regulations](#) which explains the regulatory process in an easy-to-understand format developed in partnership with the CAC.

Public Information Sharing

Also created as part of the initiative are--

-- A new [biweekly DEP newsletter](#) distributed by email on the latest news and information about agency programs webinars and upcoming events.

-- A new [DEP's YouTube channel](#) featuring videos on a variety of timely topics related to DEP

programs and issues.

-- A new [DEP Newsroom](#) where the public can sign up for alerts on a variety of programs, a DEP Speakers' Bureau and a Calendar of events.

-- A new [Learn About Permits](#) webpage designed to inform the public about the kinds of permits administered by the agency and how information about them is shared.

-- [Other useful tools](#) to learn what happening with DEP permit applications and other issues including: eFACTS to follow permit applications near you, eNOTICE to get notices of new regulations and policies as they move through the development process, eLibrary the agency's library of publications, a Mapping/GIS tool, the Permit Application Consultation Tool and where to get technical guidance.

For more information, visit DEP's new [Public Participation Center](#) webpage and the related [Be Informed!](#) and [Get Involved!](#) pages.