



1383 Arcadia Road
Lancaster, PA 17601
www.lancastercleanwaterpartners.com

April 25, 2020

Re: HB 1822, restrictions on special funds

Dear Legislator:

An alarm went off in Lancaster County communities this week with the passage of House Bill 1822. The alarm is still furiously sounding, causing panic, confusion, and disappointment.

The bill, as passed in the House, would freeze any contracts for new expenditures from a series of environmental and other funds including the County Conservation District Fund, Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund, Environmental Stewardship (Growing Greener), the Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund, Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority (PIDA), Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority Fund, and PA Infrastructure Bank funds.

Freezing these funds will be devastating to Lancaster's economy, communities, and efforts to improve the health of our local streams. We ask you to not support the passage of this bill in the Senate.

Lancaster County has already put in an enormous amount of energy to meet the 2025 Total Daily Maximum Load (TDML) requirements set by the Environmental Protection Agency. **These 2025 requirements are not going away because of COVID-19 or rapid defunding.** When 2025 arrives, COVID-19 will be gone but massive amounts of water quality improvement demands will remain in Lancaster and the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. Without continued support, Lancaster farmers, businesses and municipalities will be left behind paying the heaviest price.

Additionally, cutting or diverting these funds would significantly stifle Pennsylvania's recovery from the COVID-19 shutdown just at the time people and small businesses need an economic shot in the arm. The work that can be done to clean up our county streams is not just an environmental concern, it is a significant economic development opportunity for Lancaster County. It is a defense against further federal regulatory intrusion into our development activities and our agriculture economy.

Our Conservation District is necessary for our farmers and for moving development projects along. Effectively, this amendment would put county conservation districts out of business at a time when their services are needed most to help farmers and landowners with projects that will help Pennsylvania's economy recover. Districts depend on state support from the Conservation District Fund to pay a significant portion of their operating costs to provide vital conservation services to farmers and landowners and to issue permits for new land development projects.

In addition to the impacts on our agricultural community, these proposed approaches would severely curtail our ability to make and keep streams clean by compromising years of efforts to protect intact forests and forested riparian buffers, setting clean water efforts back substantially. It takes an average



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of 5 years of working with owners to get a forest protection project to settlement. To have funding pulled at the last stage will destroy these efforts (and investments already made). These deals are time sensitive and holding them hostage to calls to reopen shows a lack of understanding of the role of forests in clean water and also the role they play in increased demand for publicly accessible forests in a pandemic.

As our legislator, your responsibility is to uphold the values of the people, and act on our best interest. Think about our county and what is best for our communities. When the pandemic passes, our streams will still be unhealthy and highly polluted. When the pandemic passes, we will need our farmers more than ever.

We need these continued economic investments now in order to come out of this situation as strong as possible. The funding cuts are immediately contrary to that. We ask you to not support the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,
The Lancaster Clean Water Partners

Supported by:

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Peter Hughes, Red Barn Consulting

Chris Thompson, Lancaster County Conservation District

Heather Valudes, Lancaster Chamber

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