

May 18, 2020

Dear Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly,

On behalf of our citizen members and volunteers, our organizations are writing to ask you to oppose far-reaching legislative attacks on Pennsylvania's environmental laws and programs that are pending in the General Assembly. These bills are Senate Bill 327 and House Bill 1822 which are all awaiting action in the state Senate, and House Bills 2004 and 2416 which await action in the state House.

Specifically, these pieces of legislation do the following:

1. **House Bills 1822 and 2004:** On April 21st, the state House passed HB1822, which was amended to include a provision that would freeze funding for many of Pennsylvania's most crucial—and successful—environmental and conservation programs. These programs have enjoyed popular, bipartisan support for decades, yet currently are threatened by harmful cuts included in HB1822. Specific programs that would be affected include:

- The Growing Greener Program (Environmental Stewardship Fund);
- County Conservation Districts;
- The Keystone Fund (which funds Pennsylvania's state and local parks);
- Pennsylvania's Recycling Fund;
- The Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Fund (the state's premier farmland protection program);
- [And sadly, others.](#)

As more and more Pennsylvanians prepare for the “new normal,” they will undoubtedly be clamoring to take their family outdoors and enjoy the places that define the Commonwealth's incredible natural heritage. Halting programs that protect and maintain the places that enjoy broad support from Pennsylvanians is a step in the wrong direction in these trying times.

House Bill 2004 will do irreparable harm directly to the Keystone Recreation, Parks, and Conservation Fund, a wildly popular thirty-year-old program that funds Pennsylvania's state, county and local parks systems. Specifically, HB2004 halts the dedicated funding allocated to the Keystone Fund, putting the future maintenance and protection of our beloved parks at risk when Pennsylvanians are aware of the value of having access to the outdoors more than ever.

2. **Senate Bill 327 and House Bill 2416:** On April 21st, the House of Representatives also amended language from [House Bill 2416](#) into SB 327 to halt the implementation of pending or future environmental regulations until the COVID-19 emergency order is lifted. If passed into law, this legislation would halt action on environmental policies including but not limited to:

- Pending regulations to update Pennsylvania's hazardous waste regulations to comply with federal requirements;
- Proposed regulations to set air pollution standards for oil and gas operations;
- Pending proposals to set cleanup standards for PFAS contamination in the state;

- Increasing air pollution permit fees to fund DEP's air program;
- Pending proposals to increase protections for over 40 streams in the Commonwealth;
- Proposed safeguards to reduce manganese pollution in Pennsylvania's rivers and streams;
- [And sadly, other environmental regulations.](#)

These proposed safeguards are crucial to ensuring clean air, clean water and a healthy environment to the Commonwealth's residents.

For all of these reasons, we ask you to oppose House Bills 1822, 2416 and 2004, and Senate Bill 327 as long as these attacks are included in this legislation. And we ask you to oppose similar attacks to our environmental programs, laws and regulations in free-standing bills or if amended into other legislation that comes before the General Assembly.

Thanks in advance for your consideration, and we hope you remain safe and healthy in these trying times.

Sincerely,

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