

FY2022

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Pennsylvania's

CLEAN AIR | PURE WATER | HEALTHY CLIMATE

Watchdog

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About PennFuture

PennFuture is leading the transition to a clean energy economy in Pennsylvania and beyond. We are protecting our air, water, and land, and empowering citizens to build sustainable communities for future generations. With your support, PennFuture is fighting big polluters with legal muscle, enforcing environmental laws, and supporting legislative policy that protects public health. Thanks to you PennFuture is engaging and educating citizens about the realities of climate change, and giving them the tools needed to influence lawmakers on the issues.

About this Annual Impact Report

PennFuture's Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Impact Report is a summary of *program, financial, and donor* information for the period of July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. For more information about current program activities please visit our website at pennfuture.org. Previous annual reports are available at www.pennfuture.org/financial-information.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Supporter,

On behalf of our board and staff, I am thrilled to share with you just some of the successes and accomplishments we've collectively realized over this last year.

As the new President and CEO, I knew I was coming into an organization that knew how to get things done for Pennsylvania's environment and this report is evidence of that. From fighting environmental racism and supporting the state's Environmental Rights Amendment to fighting the further unnecessary buildout of our plastics industry, the board, staff and members of PennFuture have been on the job with focus, diligence and determination.

The thing I wish this report could convey however is the passion and commitment that are a given in the way our board, staff and volunteers do their work. Early in my time here, I attended a conference with other environmental groups. And, as you might expect, we were presenting on multiple panels and manning a table to educate others on the clean water work we are doing. The image that sticks with me is that table. Because what people walking by didn't see was that the person running it was simultaneously filing a court brief in a statewide case. Or that another staffer was sitting on the floor working on press statements for an air quality win. All while two other team members were presenting on connecting more deeply with rural communities.

We have had a lot of wins this year, but there remains a lot of work to do. I am energized by PennFuture's fight for environmental and climate justice. I'm excited to advocate for policies with a new Governor and a new legislature. And I am thrilled to be working with our board, our staff, and our members on a new strategic plan to get it all done.

We are at the pivot point for so many issues. Public opinion, technologies, policies and markets are all a wind at our backs to move to a clean and just future for all Pennsylvanians. I encourage you to remain engaged with work and let us know where we can do more. The most precious resource we have is our time and I thank you deeply for using some of that resource to support our efforts.

Finally, a huge thank you to Jacqui Bonomo, our now retired former President and CEO. Our paths have crossed on a number of issues over the years, from Growing Greener to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. She was always a trusted voice representing our residents' health and environment and she will be sorely missed. I hope to be half the leader.

Patrick McDonnell
President and CEO
mcdonnell@pennfuture.org



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD



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SINCE 1998.**

There are so many successes that I could point to over the last year, be it the incredible success that the Democracy For All program has had or the major legal wins protecting water quality across three major watersheds. However, it became really clear what the Board's biggest challenge would be last year when Jacqui Bonomo announced her retirement. She was leaving some big shoes to fill after several years of leading PennFuture to a lot of success.

Under the great leadership of Ellen Lutz, who headed up the Board's search committee, we set out to find the right person to lead this organization forward. We felt that we needed a leader that knew Pennsylvania and understood the unique issues and challenges that face our Commonwealth. We wanted a leader who could simultaneously be out front and the face of the organization, while also helping to maximize the efforts of our fantastic staff. We wanted a leader who understood the importance of DEIJ work and knew the effects climate change were having an outsized impact on communities of color. Lastly, we wanted to find a leader who could lead with love and with compassion.

As we went through the search, we were amazed at the quality of candidates that we had the chance to interview. Many of these candidates checked most of our "wants", however, there was one that rose to the top and checked all the boxes. We were thrilled when Patrick McDonnell accepted our offer to take over as the CEO & President of PennFuture. We felt his knowledge of the issues and his connections around the Commonwealth, as well as his leadership style all fit the mission and the needs that PennFuture currently faces. We are so excited to watch Patrick put his stamp on this organization as he builds on the fantastic legacy that has been in the works since 1998.

Lastly and most importantly, I want to thank you, our donors and supporters. Without you, we could not continue our fight for clean water and air. We could not honor the Pennsylvania constitution that assures every citizen of a clean and thriving environment. So, thank you very much for your support.

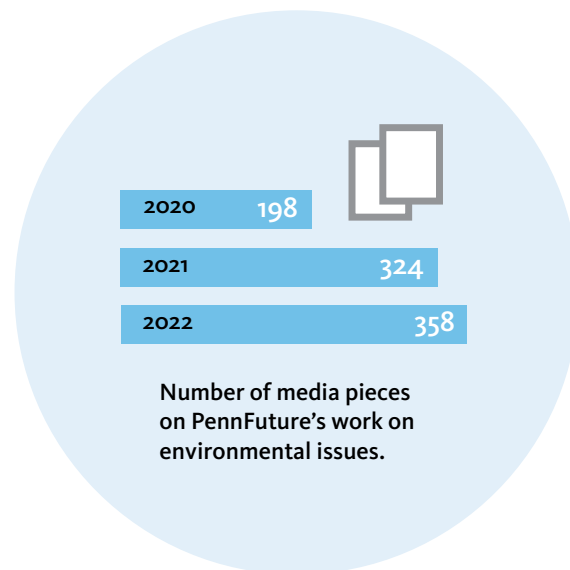
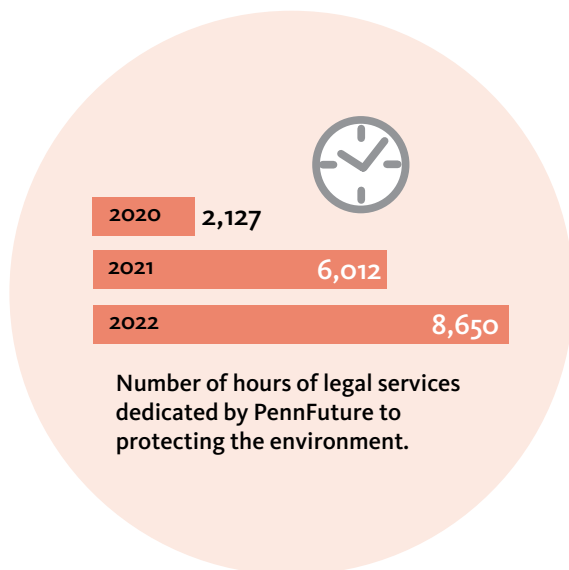
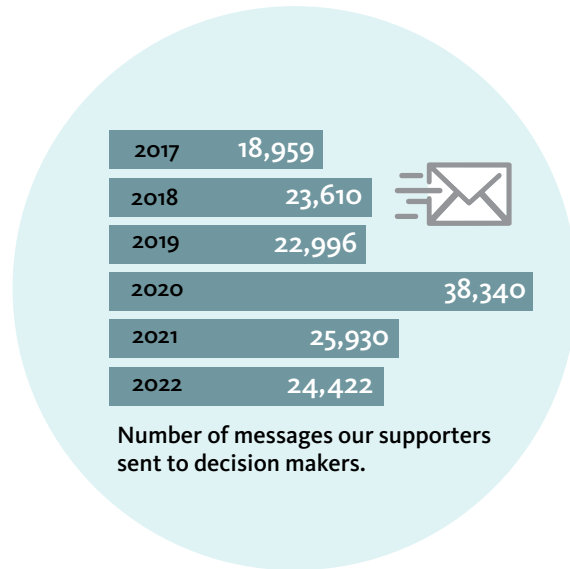
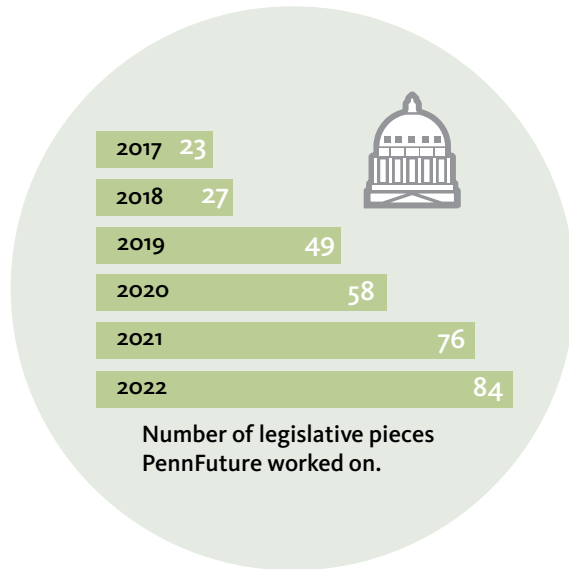
Scott E. Tobe, CAP®
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Platinum
Transparency
2023

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In 2023, PennFuture again achieved the GuideStar/Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency. This is the highest recognition by GuideStar/Candid, the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations, of our commitment to transparency and accountability to our supporters.

Four of the impact metrics we are currently reporting on GuideStar are:



For more information about PennFuture, visit our listing on [GuideStar.org](https://www.guidestar.org).

Every year PennFuture publishes dozens of blogs by staff and invited writers. Here are excerpts of some of our favorites for the fiscal year, July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

You can read the complete blogs online at <https://www.pennfuture.org/blog>



More than Skin-Deep: Environmental Racism, Justice, and Pennsylvania

July 7, 2021 | John Ukenye, Policy Analyst



We are a year out from the wave of protests, marches, sit-ins, phone and text banking, and multifaceted advocacy that shaped the Summer 2020. People began to question whole systems, political, social, and economic alike: why did, in the Land of Opportunity, the poor become poorer, the rich richer; Black and brown people keep dying from situations others individuals would not? Are there links between race and class, does the white, Black, and brown working class have more in common than meets the eye, and what does this mean for environmental advocacy?

Article 1, Section 27 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania states that “[t]he people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania’s public natural resources are

the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come.” Yet, the conditions on the ground show that not all groups have the same access to clean air or pure water.

Environmental Racism as a concept has its roots in the 1970s and 1980s, but its earliest usage as a term was by pastor and Civil Rights champion Dr. Benjamin Chavis. Dr. Chavis defined “environmental racism” as “racial discrimination in environmental policy-making, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of colour for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of colour from leadership of the ecology movements.”

Nationwide, Black Americans are three times more likely to die from exposure to air pollutants than their white counterparts. In Pennsylvania specifically, people of color are 39 percent of the population living within three miles of existing and proposed air polluting coal and fossil fuel power plants, while only composing 22 percent of Pennsylvania's total population. In addition, the poverty rate is 60 percent higher within three miles of the plants compared to the rest of the state. It is clear that people of minority groups are facing the brunt of environmental degradation at a harsher rate than other groups.

Looking at a more local level, specifically in Western Pennsylvania, the race and ethnic disparities in access to clean air and water persist. In Allegheny County, Environmental Health News and the Environmental Health journal show air pollution levels vary widely between neighborhoods, with the County region's most polluted census tracts being found in poor and minority neighborhoods, while the census tracts with the cleanest air tend to be in wealthier and whiter neighborhoods. The same data also showed higher rates of air pollution-related deaths from coronary heart disease in poor and minority neighborhoods. The story is the same when it comes to water in the County. Higher levels of lead exposure also correlated with rates of poverty of non-white populations.

The Pittsburgh City Paper highlights the Pennsylvania Department of Health's 2018 Childhood Lead Surveillance Annual Report that found that non-Hispanic Black children and Hispanic children were 3.8 times more likely to have confirmed elevated lead blood levels relative to their non-Hispanic white counterparts in Allegheny County. And these same trends of disproportionate pollution burdens being heaped on poorer communities and communities of color extends throughout Pennsylvania. This is indeed Environmental Racism in action: poorer, darker folks are left to suffer the worst that bad environmental policy has to offer.

Is it simply that Black and brown populations face the brunt of environmental degradation due to race alone? Many, including myself, would say no -- income and class plays a role that impacts some white populations and further compounds the weight of the effects on those of minority races and ethnicities.

As defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental Justice (EJ) is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin,

or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

The reality is, however, that Pennsylvania's heavily white, rural, lower-income communities are, too, facing harsh impacts from environmental degradation, specifically by the fracked gas industry. Fracking wells in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region are disproportionately located in poor rural communities, which bear much of the weight of associated pollution. Heavily-fracked communities face higher rates of numerous health effects including preterm births, high-risk pregnancies, asthma, and cardiovascular disease, with Western PA's own Washington County facing the highest number of direct deaths from fracking-based air pollution in the entire Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, some policymakers in Pennsylvania have been welcoming the industry with open arms and open pocketbooks in the form of tax subsidies (see PennFuture's latest report). State legislators know of the harmful effects that this industry brings to the air and water quality of their own constituents, yet continue to ignore calls to stop working with this harmful and dying industry and lie directly to the very people who elected them.

Moving forward, we should highlight the work of people who live in our state fighting towards a more equitable approach to environmental justice. We need to actively and loudly push back on policymakers deliberately standing in the way of progress on the environmental equity front. We need to continue to educate our friends and neighbors on a better energy and labor alternative to fracking, petrochemical, and other environmentally degrading industries. We should lend an open ear to green job makers nationwide and even internationally, and prioritize family-sustaining, green jobs over dirty and dying industries.

Environmental Racism is, indeed, more than skin-deep, as income and class clearly further heighten the impact. Fighting Environmental Racism is integral to the larger idea of Environmental Justice. The problems being faced by our largely-white, rural neighbors are not that much different than that of a Black family in the City of Pittsburgh. Both are being taken advantage of by petrochemical and other dirty manufacturing corporate neighbors that are doing anything but being "neighborly." It is through unity and solidarity between the workers, I believe, that we will be able to breathe free, drink free, and live free.



What Comes Next For Plastic Bags In Pennsylvania?

July 23, 2021 | Jessica O'Neill, Senior Attorney

July began with the expiration of a statewide restriction on banning the use of plastic bags. The development is welcomed news for municipalities across the Commonwealth implementing or considering bans on the ubiquitous plastic that too often finds its way into local waterways as litter or becomes a costly contaminant in recycling systems.

Credit likely goes to the legal challenge led by Philadelphia and other Southeastern Pennsylvania municipalities and joined by Pittsburgh. Their lawsuit likely discouraged the General Assembly's Republican leadership from renewing the bag-ban moratorium.

Originally passed in 2019, the amendment to Act 23 prohibited enacting or enforcing any tax that would discourage the use or sale of single-use plastic. After the General Assembly extended the one-year restriction in 2020, this year the July 1 extension deadline came and went as quietly as a plastic bag drifting in the wind.

Media reports suggest "pending litigation" that revealed the moratorium's unconstitutional approach may have played a role in legislators' decision not to extend the ban — for now, at least.

Are the days of plastic bags coming to an end?

This fall, the General Assembly could still take action to limit bag bans. Philadelphia's lawsuit mostly centers on the moratorium's procedural tactics.

With local plastics manufacturers and lobbyists representing the grocery industry still opposed to local bans, supporters in the General Assembly could potentially attempt to overcome their mistakes and find new ways to prevent limits on single-use plastic.

The fact that this is up for debate shows how backward-minded our state's plastics approach has become. Nationwide, a dozen states ban single-use plastic at the state or county levels. Virginia state law specifically allows municipalities to issue fees on single-use plastic if local leaders so choose.

Cities move forward

In the meantime, local action to transition away from single-use plastics is gaining momentum.

The same day that the statewide moratorium expired, Philadelphia announced implementation of the city's single-use plastic bags ordinance would begin, with enforcement starting April 1.

Philadelphia's legislation prohibits retailers from using carryout or delivery plastic bags less than 2.25 mils thick. The city will also prevent use of paper bags that contain less than 40 percent recycled content.

Pittsburgh appears next in line. City Council passed a resolution in May saying that the city intends to pass a ban on single-use plastic bags in the near future.



With Pennsylvania's two largest cities taking action to eliminate plastic waste, other towns and cities are likely to follow their lead.

Environmental and financial benefits

Let's take a moment to remember why getting rid of single-use plastics is a move in the right direction. Recent studies found plastic bag bans in other states and cities resulted in significant reduction in plastic bag consumption — in some cases, a decrease of more than 70 percent.

Benefits of switching from single-use plastic bags to reusable bags include:

- **Less Litter:** Plastic bags don't like to stay in one place. Wind-blown bags escape from trash bins, dump trucks and landfills to pollute our streets, parks, streams and rivers. Currently, the equivalent of one dump truck of plastic litter enters our oceans every day. Microplastics can hang in the air, perhaps traveling 100 miles or more downwind. That's why even our most pristine places are getting covered in plastic trash.
- **Cost Savings for Local Governments:** In recent years, the value of recycled waste has declined, leaving municipalities with narrow operating margins when processing local waste. Single-use plastic offers no post-consumer value, making it even harder to be profitable when recycling. In fact, plastic bags can jam equipment at material recovery facilities, at times causing the entire recycling facility to shut down. Such work shortages have cost cities millions of dollars.
- **Reduction in Pollution:** Plastics are manufactured using resource-intensive petrochemical processes that require burning significant amounts of fossil fuel, contaminating local air and contributing to the climate crisis.
- **Affordable Convenience:** Consumers adopt new behaviors when their options change. To help with this transition, reusable or recyclable alternatives are widely available, affordable and practical. Free tote bags should continue to be handed out at public events. Local leaders can also allocate funds to programs that help to ensure fees on single-use plastic are not punitive on marginalized members of society. In cities like Washington, D.C., proceeds are spent on environmental remediation and education efforts that directly benefit members of the community.

To ensure Pennsylvania does our part to address the growing challenge of plastic waste, PennFuture will continue to monitor the General Assembly and advocate for commonsense policies. Phasing out single-use plastics makes sense both environmentally and economically.

But if those arguments fail, perhaps those who celebrate liberty should embrace the right for cities and towns to make their own decisions, including the choice of how they manage their own waste.



Chasing Bitcoin is a Bad Investment for Pennsylvania

August 12, 2021 | Rob Altenburg, Senior Director for Energy and Climate



On August 9th, 2021, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its Sixth Assessment report, clearly linking human-caused climate change to the extreme heatwaves and severe weather events we see all around the world. While it's not too late to avoid the most severe effects, the situation is projected to get even worse without immediate action to cut carbon pollution.

Against that backdrop, it is shocking that our state government is continuing to force Pennsylvanians to not only suffer the consequences of climate change but to pay polluters massive subsidies that will result in even more emissions. Invariably these unsustainable businesses are boom-and-bust. They take the higher profits while they can, before leaving PA taxpayers to pay to clean up their mess.

PennFuture has written extensively on how this subsidy-then-bust process is propping up fracking and petrochemical businesses in Pennsylvania. This pattern can also be found in the incredibly dirty waste coal industry, but now with an unlikely partner—Bitcoin. One recent example is Stronghold Digital Mining—a new firm that repurposes dirty waste-coal burning power plants to mine the cryptocurrency known as bitcoin.

In late July 2021, Stronghold filed a form S-1 with the Securities and Exchange Commission disclosing information about the business and its finances. They report that they currently own and operate the Scrubgrass waste coal plant in Venango County, have a definitive agreement for the Panther Creek plant in Carbon County, and a letter of intent to purchase a third plant—all for the purpose of bitcoin mining. Unlike the fracking and petrochemical industry, Stronghold is at least open about the fact that their business model requires significant taxpayer subsidies for it to be viable.

Bitcoin is an energy intensive process and a growing carbon polluter

The Bitcoin Network as a whole consumes a tremendous amount of energy to run millions of special-purpose computers—known as application-specific integrated circuits or ASICs—that attempt to “mine” new blocks in the bitcoin blockchain. To create a new block these computers race to find a special number that, combined with the financial transactions and other data recorded in the block, gives a result that meets specific criteria. This is a trial-and-error process that is akin to picking the winning lottery number, but much more difficult, often taking trillions of attempts to find a working number. At the time of this writing, finding the special number might earn the winning miner nearly \$300,000 worth of bitcoins. But, if someone else finds the number first, losing miners get nothing and must start the process from scratch. To be competitive, miners build vast data centers containing potentially thousands of ASIC miners, each testing many trillion of these hashes every second.



According to data from the Cambridge Bitcoin Energy Consumption Index, the network currently takes over 9 gigawatts (GW) of power to operate and could be as high as 35GW. Even at the low end of that range, that is enough electricity for over seven million houses. Stronghold, for its part, reports that they currently operate 1,840 miners that can cumulatively test around 85 thousand-trillion hashes per second (85 PH/S) and draw about 4.1 Megawatts (MW) of power—enough to supply over 3,000 average houses.

Bottom line: it takes an obscene amount of energy to mine bitcoin and now companies are looking to power that mining by buying up cheap, dirty, outdated power plants just to run the computers to do the mining. In the case of Stronghold, this power is coming from the Scrubgrass waste-coal power plant and, based on their 2019 emissions data, the existing mining is likely resulting in over 6 tons of CO₂ being emitted every hour. That's more than 6,700 vehicle-miles worth of pollution.

That is bad enough, but Stronghold reports it has a definitive agreement to buy the Panther Creek waste-coal plant and has signed a letter of intent to purchase a third plant. In all, they are forecasting acquiring 57,000 miners by the end of 2022 and consuming 193 MW of electricity. The exact pollution rate depends on how these miners are split among the three plants, but it may

be in the range of 278 tons per hour of CO₂. Also, because this is new demand on the grid, other generators may end up increasing their output—and their pollution—to meet the demand that these plants will no longer serve. That could easily add another 25 tons of CO₂ per hour—more than 30,000 vehicle-miles worth of emissions—and possibly much higher.

Stronghold Digital Mining's business model is an environmental nightmare

Stronghold is selling its business model to investors as environmental progress—it's purchasing waste coal plants to power its cryptocurrency mining while removing culm piles that scar Pennsylvania's landscapes and communities. Unfortunately, this is a classic case of greenwashing.

Coal-fired power plants are all notoriously dirty, but waste coal facilities are even worse. In addition to CO₂, the Scrubgrass plant's most recent emissions report shows hundreds of tons of sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen, hydrochloric acid, carbon monoxide, and more than a dozen other air pollutants including neurotoxins, carcinogens, and smog-forming compounds.

In addition, the Trump administration rolled back critical air quality protections for waste-coal plants (although PennFuture and others have challenged this). While Stronghold claims that their operation is "environmentally beneficial" because it burns waste coal from piles that are currently polluting the land, they barely mention the very real public health and financial damages caused by increased air pollution and don't consider any alternatives to digging them up and burning them. Even if one believes that some waste piles are so dangerous that the damage and pollution from burning them could be justified, there is no guarantee these are the ones that will be used.

Waste coal is always dirty, but the bitcoin industry has an additional waste stream we should be concerned about—tons of electronics waste from thousands of obsolete ASICs. Because of the competitive nature of Bitcoin mining, the hardware has a very limited useful life—in some cases as short as 18 months—before new hardware renders it obsolete. We see this in Stronghold's own filing with many of their miners requiring 1,300 watts to calculate 13 trillion hashes per second (TH/s) where newer devices work three times as fast for the same power. As highly optimized "application specific" devices, there is little chance that any obsolete devices will be reused.

Pennsylvanians are, once again, being forced to subsidize pollution without any say

Another obvious problem with burning waste coal is the expense. The reason why coal plants are closing across the country is because they can't compete with cheaper gas-fired power plants and even cheaper clean renewable energy. A recent study on the levelized cost of energy (LCOE) shows coal costing more than \$65 per megawatt-hour (MWh). Gas might be as low as \$44/MWh and renewable energy can be as low as \$26/MWh. Compared to a traditional coal plant like Homer City—which itself has faced bankruptcy—Scrubgrass needs to burn more than three times as



much fuel for the same generation. Even with low-quality fuel that costs roughly half as much, it's clear that waste coal is never going to be the cheapest source of energy.

Stronghold claims that fuel costs, operational and maintenance costs, and administrative expenses to operate Scrubgrass will result in power costing \$43/MWh. That seems very optimistic since the company reported \$17,629,051 in total 2019 operating expenses in the S-1 filing and 239,191 MWh of generation reported to the Energy Information Administration. That suggests actual costs over \$73/MWh. The S-1 lists income from energy sales for the period of just over \$29/MWh, which is slightly higher than the PJM grid average of \$25/MWh, but it also shows a \$6 million operating loss on \$7 million in energy sales, so real costs operating the facilities are likely much higher than their sales suggest.

Even if the company can bring the operating costs down to 43/MWh, it's still a big leap to go to the \$18/MWh Stronghold claims they expect to pay for power going forward. To get to that number requires significant state subsidies.

Subsidy #1: PJM Capacity Over-procurement

First, Stronghold expects to receive \$6/MWh from the PJM capacity market. This is a separate payment, in addition to the purchase of energy, that our electric grid operator makes to ensure sufficient generation capacity will be available in the future. Companies get these payments if they bid low enough to clear the capacity auction and are available to be dispatched in the delivery year. Over-procurement of capacity has historically acted as a subsidy for fossil fuels, but for 2022/23 PJM procured much less capacity resulting in a market clearing price of \$50/MW-day, or about \$1.7 million dollars a year for a plant like Scrubgrass. With payments that low, the only way they will receive \$6.00/MWh is if the facility only ran at 35% capacity. There would be no reason to purchase two additional waste coal plants if Scrubgrass had that much spare capacity, so the company must be counting on capacity prices in the future well over \$100/MW-day. That may have been common in the past, but there is no guarantee payments will return to that level. If true though, this implies billions of dollars in additional payments will come from the pockets of ratepayers.

Subsidy #2: Tier II Alternative Energy Credits

While most states have "Renewable" portfolio standards, Pennsylvania has an Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard (AEPS) program that subsidizes polluting resources like waste coal under

what is called Tier II. In 2019, Tier II credits were not particularly valuable averaging only \$0.31/MWh of generation statewide. Scrubgrass did better than average reporting \$105,532 from this source or \$0.41/MWh, but going forward, their prospectus estimates a huge jump to \$15/MWh for these credits.

In 2020, our legislature changed the rules to the AEPS program restricting where Tier II credits could be generated. Instead of coming from a qualifying facility anywhere in the PJM grid—an area covering all or part of 13 states and the District of Columbia, those credits will largely need to be generated within Pennsylvania. Prices are expected to spike as a result and, in fact, 2020 credits already shot up to \$1.92 before this change was finalized costing ratepayers over \$21 million.

We don't have a clear indication how high these prices will actually go, but this doesn't appear to have been a significant concern for the Legislature, and it certainly didn't stop them. If prices actually go up to \$15 per credit, it would cost Pennsylvania ratepayers an additional \$168 million. That is not only far more than we pay for cleaner wind and solar credits, it is more than the entire AEPS program cost in 2020.

Subsidy #3: Coal Refuse Reclamation tax credit

The next handout Pennsylvanians are providing these plants comes in the form of the Coal Refuse Reclamation (CRR) tax credit. This is a transferable credit of \$4 for each ton of waste coal these facilities burn. Perversely, this means a plant burning dirtier and lower quality fuel gets a bigger handout per megawatt hour. While the original tax credit was capped at \$10 million, our legislature again dug into the pockets of ratepayers in late 2020 doubling the cap to \$20 million.

While currently the \$4/MWh Stronghold expects to receive from this subsidy is reasonable for a facility like Scrubgrass, the \$20 million cap may already be fully utilized. That means that if the company expands to three facilities and runs at higher capacity like they claim, there will be proportionally fewer credits available per megawatt hour in the future. That makes their claims in the prospectus suspect, but there has already been talk in our legislature about raising the cap on this handout yet again—that would mean higher profits for these polluters.

Subsidy #4: RGGI Allowance Set-asides

At the same time we are giving significant handouts to buy more pollution, Governor Wolf has directed the Department of Environmental protection to move forward with programs to begin to address the climate crisis. One of these is the CO₂ Budget Trading Rule through which Pennsylvania will participate with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). This program sets a cap for allowable carbon pollution from electric generation and requires that facilities purchase an allowance for each ton of CO₂ they emit.

Facing significant pressure from the legislature, this program included—and then expanded—yet another handout for waste coal generation. The program sets aside 12.8 million allowances that, if needed, will be given to waste coal generation for free.

As a result, waste coal facilities can nearly double their 2019 generation and dump all the resulting pollution in the air without paying the fees other polluters must pay. Of course, the citizens of Pennsylvania will still pay the price for increased pollution and we will all suffer the worsening effects of climate change if we don't focus on cutting harmful emissions.

Chasing bitcoin is a bad investment for Pennsylvania

After totaling up all the subsidies, Stronghold claims it will only be paying \$18 per megawatt-hour of electricity—or \$11/MWh less than average on our power grid. That is an amazingly low rate, if true, but it's far from a sure thing. Their projections are based on about \$16 in direct handouts for each ton of waste coal they burn, plus free carbon allowances that may be worth in the neighborhood of \$8 per ton.

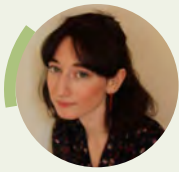
Even if the company receives all of those handouts, it still may not be able to operate as cheaply as they claim. In addition to these highly optimistic predictions, they are relying on indirect subsidies in the form of weak regulation—specifically that the EPA will not correct the abuses of the Trump administration, which weakened the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, among other rules.

Those cheap operating costs also have a big price. They neglect the very real costs of public health and environmental damage caused by the excess air pollution—particularly in the vulnerable communities near these plants. The negative externalities these plants cause but don't pay for, when reduced to dollar values, the citizens of Pennsylvania paying for all these damages could end up being the single largest subsidy the facility receives.

Even if we pay the high prices and accept all the harms, this isn't a sustainable long-term business model. By design, the number of bitcoins one receives for mining a new block decreases over time and, if the value of each coin rises, the competition only gets more intense. This creates a highly-competitive industry with miners flocking to wherever electricity is cheap. Even if sites like Scrubgrass make sense today, things can change quickly if we don't keep ramping up the handouts.

There is a better way. According to the waste coal industry's own numbers, proper disposal of the waste piles would only cost \$33 per ton and other options, such as stabilizing the piles by planting beach grass, could be far cheaper. Instead of forcing Pennsylvanians to hand over their hard-earned money to an industry that turns one form of pollution into another, we should be putting people to work actually solving the problem of coal waste.

If Stronghold wants to truly be a sustainable and environmentally beneficial company, it should ditch dirty coal and source its energy from cheaper, scalable, and rapidly growing renewable energy. If not, it's no better than the other major polluters in Pennsylvania or the failed coal companies that left these mountains of waste coal behind in the first place.



Civilian Conservation Corps: Then and Now

August 23, 2021 | Annie Regan, Senior Program Manager

Earlier this month, Promised Land State Park celebrated its annual Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Day in which the public was invited to the Masker Museum filled with live music, cake, CCC artifacts, and an honorary guest speaker, Cornelius McHugh, a former CCC worker who had just recently turned 100.

We learned that the Civilian Conservation Corps played a critical role healing our environment and putting Americans back to work. It was established in 1933 amidst the Dust Bowl wherein forests had been clear cut and burned, resulting in erosion and sedimentation of local streams and waterways as well as the Great Depression, in which 13 million people were suddenly unemployed due to an unregulated stock market crash.

This unique federal program established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt put 3 million single men between the ages of 18-25 to work, remedying the damage done by the poor land practices of the earlier centuries. While enrolled, some learned to read, many obtained their high school diploma and all learned a trade. Purposeful work restored a sense of values, taught essential skills and developed a work ethic among these recruits. The CCC boys fought fires, planted trees, built trails, campgrounds and roads, and helped create the beautiful Promised Land State Park in the Poconos area that so many visit today.

The CCC provided opportunities during a time without any social programs in place. Cornelius had mentioned he started his work for the CCC just five days after graduating high school. He had earned \$30 a month, in which he had sent \$25 back home to his family and kept \$5 for himself—which he stated was efficient, especially because there were no other opportunities. In addition, the \$5 he spent on cigarettes, candy, beer, and dates with local girls helped contribute to the local economy.

Many of the CCC boys went on to fight in WWII, and when they returned, they came home to a country that was prosperous and had conserved its natural treasures and a nationwide system of parks accessible to everyone.

The Civilian Conservation Corps had been a proven success, building 800 state parks in eight years, while keeping local businesses going and families fed. The success of the CCC in rebuilding our nation has taught us that we do not turn our backs on our fellow Americans in need and that we conserve our lands and waters for future generations.

And it's time to bring it back, but with a modernized spin to it.

As communities in Pennsylvania and across the country continue to face devastating economic conditions as well as the effects of the climate crisis, a revitalized Civilian Conservation Corps would enable us to invest in our workforce, our environment, and the next generation of conservationists.

Earlier this year, Senator Bob Casey proposed a new bill, S.B. 2414, for a revitalized CCC that will create federal conservation jobs, support agricultural conservation and ensure we are prioritizing environmental justice communities.

This bill comes after months of close collaboration with regional advocates like PennFuture and the ReImagine Appalachia coalition, to ensure that this legislation will help communities most impacted by the combined impacts of the downturn of the fossil fuel industry, the pandemic, and an ongoing opioid epidemic that has devastated families.

This CCC proposal prioritizes Black and Indigenous people, working people with low incomes, rural workers and returning citizens. Seventy million Americans—one in three adults—have a criminal record. By prioritizing these marginalized groups, a revitalized CCC could reverse the consequences of mass incarceration, by lifting barriers to the formerly incarcerated, those battling with opioid addiction, and their families.

Not only does this CCC proposal have a strong restorative justice component, but it will assist with carbon absorption by restoring wetlands, planting millions of diverse, native plants and trees, and removing invasive trees and shrubs. A new CCC can help farmers implement regenerative practices to restore the land by the new extractive industry practices over the last decades, potentially absorbing over 20% of all carbon emissions from the Appalachian region alone.

According to a recent study from the Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) and ReImagine Appalachia, relaunching the CCC could create 57,000 jobs in Pennsylvania. How could we pass that up?

This modernized Civilian Conservation Corps combines sound environmental policy with family-sustaining jobs and training. Similar to the lesson learned from the original CCC, we do not turn our backs on fellow Americans in need and must work to conserve our lands and water for future generations to come.





PennEast Pipeline is Cancelled!

September 30, 2021 | Abigail M. Jones,
Vice President of Legal and Policy



Earlier this week it was announced that the PennEast Pipeline company will cease development of its proposed fracked gas pipeline determining that “further development of the project no longer is supported.” The 120-mile, 36-inch diameter pipeline, which was slated to run from Luzerne County in northeast Pennsylvania through the Delaware River watershed to New Jersey, was unable to get all necessary environmental permits.

PennFuture responded to this announcement with relief for our environment and communities and thanks for everyone who fought against this pipeline!

The decision to cease development of the PennEast pipeline came as a welcome surprise, especially since the company just won a big case with the U.S. Supreme Court that allowed the company to use eminent domain on state-owned or controlled lands in New Jersey. We knew something was going on when, despite that win, PennEast decided to stop condemnation proceedings in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Condemnation occurs when the private property is taken for public use and the landowner is given “fair market value” for that property. In 2017, we joined with Save Carbon County and others to highlight the unfair practices in which pipeline companies may condemn private lands for pipeline right-of-ways even before the pipeline route is finalized. Once condemned, the pipeline company may access the property to do surveys and may even destroy some of the natural resources on the land, like by clearcutting trees along the proposed right-of-way.

In addition, PennFuture has been concerned with the PennEast pipeline’s environmental impacts since its inception in 2014. Impacts from the PennEast pipeline would have included degradation of streams, including special protection waters; loss of high functioning wetlands; destruction of forest habitat and increased invasive species; and increased greenhouse gas emissions, among other things. PennFuture—both individually as well as with others, including our key partners Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and Clean Air Council—have submitted numerous public comments opposing the various federal and state approvals the PennEast pipeline needed. Additionally, among other actions taken, PennFuture intervened in proceedings before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and our ally DRN has brought numerous legal challenges against PennEast.

Many other local, regional, state, and federal groups fought against the destructive PennEast pipeline. As result of this strong opposition, New Jersey had recently denied critical environmental permits for the pipeline. This caused PennEast to propose to bifurcate its process and build the PA-only portion of the pipeline in phases to allow for construction to move forward, despite it being a pipeline to nowhere, as PennFuture pointed out in our comments on the “Phase One Amendment” proposal. And while PennEast has stated that it is “examining the proper next steps in the regulatory process as it pertains to the Phase One Amendment pending at FERC,” we believe that the PennEast pipeline is dead in PA.

No doubt that the sustained legal, regulatory, and outreach efforts of PennFuture and our partners resulted in the necessary delay of construction of this project. And New Jersey’s forceful recognition of the environmental harms of this pipeline and their denial of key permits was critical to PennEast inability to quickly push this pipeline through. But I don’t think we can overlook the fact that this decision came from PennEast—and not the courts. This appears to be a business decision rather than a conclusive legal holding that the pipeline cannot be built. Because we are now at a time when market forces show that investment in fracked gas is no longer as profitable as it once was, such fierce and coordinated opposition seems to be working to halt the fracked gas industry from proposing facilities that may be operating on the margins.

But Pennsylvanians cannot rely on market forces, private business decisions, or other states to protect us from harmful fracked gas and petrochemical facilities. Our Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) must do everything it can to live up to its name and protect Pennsylvania’s environment. The DEP is a trustee under PA’s Environmental Rights Amendment (ERA), Article I, Section 27 of our state constitution. The ERA puts our right to “clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment” on par with other First Amendment rights like free speech. Thus, DEP must take seriously its fiduciary obligation to “conserve and maintain [Pennsylvania’s public natural resources] for the benefit of all the people.”

To continue to issue approvals to an industry that we have seen time and time and time again destroy our environment and threaten the health and safety of our communities violates that fiduciary duty of the trustee. Rather, DEP must look critically at applications and promises made and must use its permitting process to ensure that construction and operation of pipelines will not harm our environment. DEP must continue to issue strong enforcement actions against these companies when—and in PA it appears to be when, not if - they destroy our waters, our lands, our communities.

To end on a positive note, PennFuture is very happy that the PennEast pipeline no longer seems to be a threat in Pennsylvania. This news is a huge relief for PennFuture and the impacted communities across the Delaware River watershed who have been tirelessly working to defeat this terrible pipeline. We couldn’t have gotten here without the support of our partners, supporters, and members. And we will continue to fight to protect our communities from the harmful impacts of the fracked gas and petrochemical industries.



Philadelphia Energy Solutions Hearing Brings Environmental Justice to Forefront

November 19, 2021 | Adam Nagel, Campaign Manager

The case for environmental justice stood centerstage this week during a hearing on the ongoing remediation efforts at the former Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES) refinery complex. The Pennsylvania Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee held its second hearing related to the former refinery and the aftermath of the 2019 explosion and fire that ultimately led it to cease operations. PennFuture proudly stood with community members, public health experts, and environmental advocates to call for a more vigorous cleanup at the site to guarantee a safer and healthier environment for nearby communities.

The former refinery site includes an estimated 1,400 acres and encompasses more space than Center City in Philadelphia. For a time, it served as the largest refinery on the East Coast. But more importantly, it served as a constant source of anguish and anger for the surrounding communities as they suffered the ill effects of living in such proximity to Philadelphia's largest source of pollution and environmental degradation.

It is important to remember that the refinery had struggled financially for many years. PES entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2018, only to reenter Chapter 11 following the 2019 explosion. Less than a decade earlier, the site's previous owner, Sunoco, deemed the refinery so costly that it was prepared to close its operations if a buyer could not be found. PES purchased the site only with the promise of substantial subsidies and tax relief provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In many ways, the fire that caused the refinery site to close served as a moment of hope for residents in South and Southwest Philadelphia. Persistent odors emanating from the site began to disappear. Residents began to envision a future use for the site free of fossil fuels and they hoped for increased collaboration from the new owners, which became Hilco Redevelopment Partners (HRP).

Although HRP has engaged in a sophisticated and concerted promotional campaign to rebrand the site, the new owners have often failed to substantively engage with surrounding communities on the future use of the site, relying on vague plans to create a life sciences hub and distribution center that will supposedly create thousands of jobs. During testimony, PennFuture shared the concerns residents have raised surrounding the narrow interpretation of public participation requirements established by Act 2. Impacted residents have consistently voiced concerns that information related to the remediation is not presented in a timely manner and is not presented in a clear and concise manner. While we recognize that this work began under the cloud of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on public gatherings, we join community residents in calling for additional efforts from Evergreen Resources Group, LLC (Evergreen), and HRP to substantively engage with the public on the ongoing remediation of the site.

PennFuture supports the efforts of organizations like the United South-Southwest Coalition and their ongoing grassroots efforts to



engage with residents, harness their collective power, and demand accountability from Evergreen, HRP, the City of Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The refinery may be closed but much work remains to be done to ensure that the site is remediated thoroughly and effectively to ensure the health and safety of nearby communities. PennFuture hopes that the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will seek to strengthen requirements surrounding public participation under Act 2.

Most importantly, we hope that this site serves as a stark reminder of the critical need to rethink planning and development in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. No longer can we ignore that low-income communities and communities of color have suffered a disproportionate impact from historically racist practices like redlining and short-sighted environmental policies that directly harmed their friends and families.

Environmental justice must be at the heart of our policies related to land use, zoning, and development. Environmental justice must be at the heart of our environmental policies. Last month, PennFuture proudly stood with Governor Wolf, the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, advocates, stakeholders, and community members, to support executive and legislative initiatives that would codify and expand the Office of Environmental Justice within the Department of Environmental Protection.

One of those initiatives, Senate Bill 189, was introduced by State Senator Vincent Hughes and referred to the Committee in February. PennFuture strongly supports this legislation and its proposed aims of addressing environmental justice in low-income communities and communities of color, integrating environmental justice throughout the regulatory process, and developing a statewide environmental justice strategy for the Commonwealth.

The remediation efforts at the former refinery complex have further identified the need to review Act 2 and the requirements contained within it. But, this process has also underscored the need to prioritize the health and well-being of people and communities when decisions are being made with regard to land use, zoning, and development. Senate Bill 189 will put Pennsylvania on a path to do this and we hope that the Committee will take up the legislation.

PennFuture will continue its efforts to craft and support policies across all levels of government to advance the cause of environmental justice and prioritize the health and well-being of disproportionately impacted communities.

To view the hearing and read all submitted testimony, [click here](#).



PennFuture Asks PA Supreme Court to Protect Pennsylvanians' Groundwater and Environmental Rights

January 19, 2022 | Emma Bast, Staff Attorney

In 1736, Benjamin Franklin coined the phrase: “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This proverb remains as true today as it did in the earliest days of the Commonwealth, and is a foundational idea to the state constitution’s Environmental Rights Amendment (ERA): The Commonwealth, and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), must look ahead into the future when it comes to environmental impacts, and consider what the outcome of something is going to be down the line.

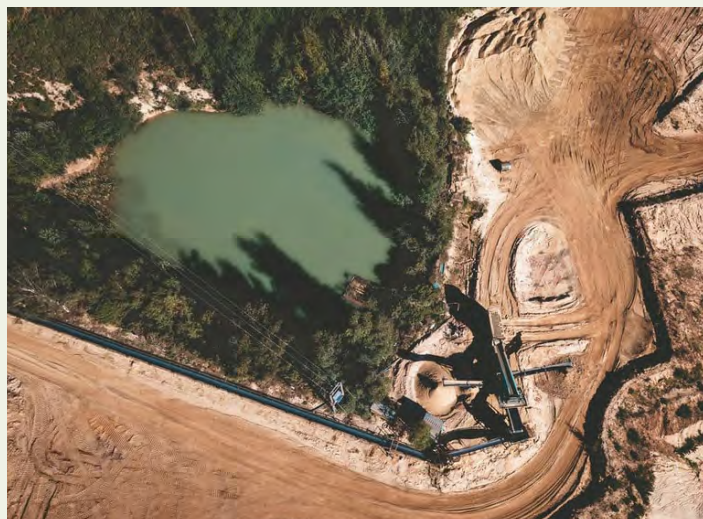
This was the critical idea in the amicus—or “friend of the court”—brief that PennFuture, with several key allies, filed before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on January 14, 2022. PennFuture argued that the state’s ERA requires the DEP to consider the environmental impacts of its decisions and the permits it grants ahead of time, and not just rubber stamp projects and hope they will get cleaned up later. It is common sense that sometimes the best way to fix a mess is to never create it in the first place, and that is especially true for environmental problems. Taxpayer dollars, environmental impact, human and environmental health, and the potential for unforeseen consequences matter. Unfortunately, the DEP did not think about these things, so PennFuture wrote a brief explaining to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court why it should have.

In this case, which kicked off in 2003, the company Gibraltar Rock had proposed to locate a rock quarry in the township of New Hanover in Montgomery County. The problem is that the quarry is right next door to a hazardous site that has contaminated the local groundwater with a number of compounds that are dangerous to people and the environment alike.

In 2005, the DEP issued a mining permit to Gibraltar Rock. The DEP, it should be said, has a program separate from the mining program that is specifically for the cleanup of contaminated sites like the one in New Hanover. That program already was well aware of the state of the hazardous site and the contaminated groundwater in New Hanover.

One might assume that the DEP would coordinate these programs, since it oversees both. One would be wrong.

In fact, when local citizen groups and the township ultimately appealed the permit to the Environmental Hearing Board (EHB), the EHB found that the DEP’s supposed coordination over the years was “essentially meaningless,” and that the DEP had simply “failed to give the matter any serious thought.” After a hearing that lasted for four days, the EHB found that quarry mining would not only be likely to make groundwater contamination worse, but it would create new contamination of previously clean water! In the end, the EHB found that the DEP did not do its job on several fronts. First, it did not make sure that the quarry met the most basic requirements of the mining law. Second, the DEP did not do its constitutional duty to consider what would happen to the environment if the quarry opened.



The quarry appealed, and the case next went to the Commonwealth Court. The Commonwealth Court chose to ignore the detailed, 84-page facts and analysis of the EHB. Instead, in a surprise twist, the Commonwealth Court wrote that the quarry company had agreed to clean up the groundwater—which was incorrect—and then overturned the EHB opinion. The case is now at the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

PennFuture and our allies wrote a “friend of the court” brief to ensure that the Supreme Court understands what is at stake here. The Commonwealth Court opinion is contrary to years of Supreme Court precedent, and if it stands, could lead to a huge rollback of environmental protection. We argued three main points:

That the DEP has a duty under the ERA to consider in advance the environmental impacts of its decisions, even when they are impacts involving another DEP program;

The EHB properly decided the DEP failed to comply with its ERA duty to consider groundwater pollution impacts from the nearby contaminated site, and;

That the Commonwealth Court’s opinion on the ERA issue is inconsistent with the Supreme Court’s prior ERA decisions and unsupported by the record.

The brief was filed on behalf of Professor John Dernbach of the Environmental Law and Sustainability Center at Widener University Commonwealth Law School, the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Green Amendments for the Generations, and the Clean Air Council.

The case is Gibraltar Rock, Inc. v. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, which has two docket numbers; there is an identical brief filed in each. We will be sure to keep you in the loop as soon as there is new information pertaining to this case.



Fallacy, Fiction, and Falsehoods: Debunking the Fossil Fuel Industry's Stance on Russia's War in Ukraine

March 25, 2022 | Rob Altenburg, Senior Director for Energy and Climate



On Feb. 24, Russia commenced its unprovoked and atrocious invasion of its neighbor Ukraine. It didn't take long for fossil fuel interests in the United States to exploit this geopolitical and humanitarian crisis for their own benefit, using the war to call for increased fracking, fast-tracked permitting, new subsidies, and relaxed environmental regulations here in America.

Unfortunately, the industry didn't stop there. Nearly every day, there are news articles, social media content and opinion pieces from industry boosters who spread false narratives, myths and other fallacies, all in an effort to further pad the pockets of corporate polluters.

This is a running list of some of the most egregious bad-faith arguments being put forth by the fossil fuel industry and their legislative champions in media outlets, accompanied by fact-checking of those arguments. Please continue to check back frequently, as we will add to this list as we come across new content.

Myth: In a recent Op Ed piece, state Sen. Camera Bartolotta made many false and disingenuous statements about Pennsylvania's role in combating Russian aggression. Notably, Bartolotta said Gov. Tom Wolf "banned natural gas development in the eastern third of the state" and "banned development of the state's own natural gas rights underlying publicly owned property." Finally, the state senator bluntly said "the U.S. needs Putin's oil."

Fact: There is a lot to unpack here. First, the Delaware River Basin Commission—which is composed of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and a representative from the federal government—voted to ban fracking in Pennsylvania's portion of the basin last year. Gov. Wolf is but one of many voting members of the DRBC, and did not act unilaterally when the agency banned fracking in the basin.

Secondly, Gov. Wolf did not ban fracked gas development on public lands in Pennsylvania. He placed a moratorium on new drilling, which is a huge difference. Prior to that moratorium, Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources leased more than 250,000 acres of state forest lands in the Marcellus play, 65% of which hasn't been drilled (163,089 acres). The problem isn't availability of locations, it's the economics. The companies drill only when it makes economic sense, which it currently does not. Saying that Gov. Wolf "banned" drilling on our public lands is an outright lie.

Thirdly, the United States does not need Russian oil, as evidenced by President Biden's ban on Russian imports. Even before that ban, roughly 8% of U.S. imports of oil and petroleum products came from Russia—a modest amount by any measure.

Myth: In a March 23 news story concerning PennFuture and other groups shutting down a liquefied natural gas plant in Bradford County, the president of the Marcellus Shale Coalition said "the worldwide need for U.S. natural gas exports has never been more critical."

Fact: Europe, which is directly threatened by Putin's turn to war, has already come to the conclusion that an economy tethered to fossil fuels is highly unpredictable, costly, and dangerous—particularly when we factor in the impacts of climate change.

It's not like Europe is clamoring for our energy exports. Germany recently announced it is accelerating its timeline to achieve 100 percent renewable energy. The European Union is readying an initiative to fast-track renewable energy projects and cut the continent's use of fossil fuels in half in eight years. And most EU countries are ahead of schedule in their renewable energy goals and are not slowing down. Clearly, fracked gas is not the answer.

Myth: In a March 8th editorial in the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Pennsylvania state Sen. Gene Yaw said that “renewable energy accounts for less than one third of global energy supply and remains notoriously unreliable.”

Fact: This is wrong on two counts. First, renewable energy—which encompasses a huge range of sources, including wind, solar, and hydroelectric—is in fact equally reliable to other energy sources. No kind of power plant runs 24/7, 365 days a year, and operating America’s electric grid always involves managing variability of supply and demand at all times.

Second, it’s contradictory for Yaw to claim renewables are unreliable when he’s talking about a fossil fuel supply that has proven to be—you guessed it—highly unreliable when it’s controlled by a despot like Vladimir Putin. Fossil fuels have always been controlled by whichever country or political entity sits atop them, which leads to a great deal of volatility and weaponization of these products. Nobody owns the sun and wind. They cannot be manipulated or controlled for political or other gain.

Myth: In a letter sent to President Biden on March 2, the Senate Natural Resources Committee claimed that President Biden is responsible for soaring gas prices because of his hostile attitude toward the oil and gas industry, including a moratorium on drilling on public lands.

Fact: President Biden is currently outpacing his predecessor when it comes to issuing drilling permits on public lands. According to the Center for Biological Diversity: “the Biden administration approved 3,557 permits for oil and gas drilling on public lands in its first year, far outpacing the Trump administration’s first-year total of 2,658.” That’s not to mention that oil and gas companies have thousands of leases on public lands that are unused and inactive, which has nothing to do with President Biden, and everything to do with energy companies’ own business choices.

Myth: In a recent Op Ed piece, U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis alleged that scaling up domestic oil and gas is as easy as “flipping the switch.”

Fact: Domestic crude oil production in the U.S. is at historically high levels with 2019, 2020, and 2021 exceeding production in all other years. Production of natural gas in 2021 also reached an all-time high both nationally and in Pennsylvania. Even if companies had the ability and desire to increase production it could take years before we see significant changes. That’s not likely given the fact investors are hesitant to pour more money into companies that have underperformed in recent years.

Myth: Industry boosters are claiming that Pennsylvania is in a position to increase LNG production and exports to Europe, and say that “fracking may be America’s most powerful weapon against Russian aggression.”

Fact: Liquefied Natural Gas exports reached peak levels in 2021 at just over 3.5 trillion cubic feet. Many European nations, including the United Kingdom, France, Netherlands, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, and Poland imported record high levels of American

LNG. Because our infrastructure is already operating near capacity, meeting the demand in Europe required diverting production that would normally be sold into Asian markets. At this point, increasing exports to Europe will require major investments in infrastructure on both sides of the Atlantic. Accomplishing this will take years and cost, potentially, billions of dollars. Furthermore, this assumes that Europe is looking to buy, but in fact, they are responding to this crisis by accelerating their plans to move to renewable energy.

Myth: In his “End Russian Aggression Act,” state Rep. Seth Grove has suggested that Pennsylvania’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is somehow connected to or impacted by Russia’s war and oil and gas exports.

Fact: Under the RGGI program, Pennsylvania’s electric generators burning fossil fuels will pay market-based emission fees for each ton of carbon pollution they emit. The proceeds from this program will be invested in cost-effective programs to reduce energy consumption and air pollution. The net result will be to help diversify our generation mix and lower both our dependence on fossil fuels and our exposure to a fossil fuel market Putin and others can manipulate. Simply put, RGGI has absolutely nothing to do with Russia or its oil and gas exports.

Myth: In a March 10 article in the New York Times, a fossil fuel executive acknowledges “the need to tackle climate change,” but said “that effort should take a back seat to the more urgent need to increase fossil fuel production.”

Fact: Action on climate change has been taking a back seat for decades, and this current moment is definitely not the time to backslide any further. The science backs up that claim: many of the impacts of global warming are now simply “irreversible,” according to the UN’s latest assessment, and humans and nature are being pushed beyond their abilities to adapt. It’s already well past time for humanity to break its addiction to fossil fuels, and the industry will always be looking for ways to stay relevant in a world that is increasingly climate-conscious.

Myth: Weakening environmental protections will allow us to increase production and become independent of foreign oil.

Fact: The US is already operating very near its all-time peak level of crude oil production, with over 4 billion barrels produced last year. In spite of this near-record production, the US still imported more than 3 billion barrels of oil in 2021 with more than 245 million barrels coming from Russia.

Pennsylvania is also operating near its peak levels of oil production, but that represents a fraction of a percent of the national total with less than 7 million barrels produced in 2021. The true path to energy independence lies in strengthening and securing our grid and reducing reliance on oil in the first place, not in rolling back the environmental protections that let us breathe, drink clean water, and enjoy the natural resources of our incredible state and country.



PennFuture, Partners Halt Construction of Proposed Liquefied Natural Gas Plant in Bradford County

March 28, 2022 | Angela Kilbert, Staff Attorney



PennFuture, representing our partners Clean Air Council and Sierra Club, secured a big legal victory on March 18 by obtaining a settlement that halts the construction of a proposed Bradford County Real Estate Partners (“BCREP”) Liquefied Natural Gas (“LNG”) facility near the Susquehanna River in Wyalusing Township, Bradford County, in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

In August, PennFuture and our partners appealed a second extension of the air pollution permit for the proposed facility issued by the Department of Environmental Protection (“DEP”) to the Environmental Hearing Board (“EHB”). In this challenge, we objected to the second extension on several grounds, including that DEP erred in granting the extension because BCREP had not commenced construction at the Wyalusing facility, as required by the regulations. Further, the second extension relied on outdated and inappropriate pollution control technology. We also objected to the second extension because the DEP relied on flawed analysis resulting in insufficient and erroneous air emission limits, and several other significant deficiencies as detailed in our Notice of Appeal, which may be found [here](#).

The parties agreed that BCREP will not move forward with construction of the facility under its current air pollution permit and will allow the permit to expire on July 22, 2022. In return, PennFuture and our partners ended our appeal of the second extension of the air pollution permit. If BCREP wants to build this facility, the settlement requires them to go through the

process of applying for and obtaining an entirely new air pollution permit from DEP.

The proposed Wyalusing facility would have processed fracked natural gas into highly explosive LNG for shipment by truck or train through Pennsylvania communities to a proposed LNG export facility in Gibbstown, New Jersey for transport to overseas markets. This proposed LNG export scheme would endanger the health of our communities and environment, increase fracking in Pennsylvania, and lead to the further entrenchment of the fossil fuel industry. If constructed under the current air permit, the Wyalusing facility would have been permitted to emit over a million tons of greenhouse gasses and hundreds of tons of other harmful air pollutants annually, contributing to both climate change and dangerous air pollution. To learn more about LNG and its dangers, please check out our LNG Blog Series: [LNG Blog #1](#), [LNG Blog #2](#), [LNG Blog #3](#), [LNG Blog #4](#), and [LNG Blog #5](#).

PennFuture is working hard to protect our waters, our air, and our communities from the dangers of the petrochemical buildout across Pennsylvania. Halting the construction of this LNG facility is an important step of that work and our fight for a clean energy future.

If you are interested in supporting our work, please become a member today!



PennFuture Celebrates Lake Erie and Introduces New Erie Campaign Manager During PA Clean Water Education Week

April 13, 2022 | Jenny Tompkins, Campaign Manager for Clean Water Advocacy

PennFuture is celebrating its sixth annual PA Clean Water Education Week, dedicated to showcasing the Commonwealth's unique waterways and advocating for their health by ensuring sufficient state funding for protection and restoration initiatives. Throughout the week, we highlight each of PA's six major watersheds. Today we celebrate the Lake Erie Watershed!

There is much to appreciate about Lake Erie. The 11th largest lake in the world by surface area, Erie provides drinking water to over 11 million people basin-wide. Erie is the warmest and shallowest of the five Great Lakes and, subsequently, the most biologically productive and diverse. Lake Erie also presents a success story for clean water funding. Efforts of the 1970s, including the passage of the Clean Water Act and the multi-national Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, addressed unabated industrial pollution, agricultural runoff, and poor wastewater treatment that plagued Lake Erie. More recent funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative provided extra assistance for priority cleanup locations known as Areas of Concern, including Presque Isle Bay, which was deemed safe again and delisted in 2013. Consistent support from decisionmakers and dedicated clean water funding have allowed Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay to become the thriving recreational, commercial, and cultural assets we know today.

In my first weeks with PennFuture in Erie, it became clear that many Erieites are proud of the improvements made to their lake and bay. However, we cannot take this progress for granted and must remain unified in our resolve for protection of these resources. Today, our lake faces complex challenges linked to climate change, surface runoff, invasive species, legacy and emergent industrial toxins, and pollution from the fossil fuel and plastics industries. Watershed residents in historically burdened communities, particularly communities of color, face compounding and disproportionate impacts from legacy contamination and other threats. For these reasons, we continue to advocate for the funding necessary to limit the impacts of our built and agricultural resources on water quality, to improve ecosystem and community resilience, and to foster an appreciation of these resources among all Pennsylvanians by ensuring everyone has access to outdoor amenities, including our lake.

Sufficient funding is essential for protecting Lake Erie and our watershed residents but is only one piece of a comprehensive approach requiring policy change and involvement from decision makers at all levels, businesses, academic institutions, and a diverse array of citizen advocates. I am thankful for the foundational work of our staff and community partners as outlined in *Our Water, Our Future: A Common Agenda for Protecting Pennsylvania's Lake Erie Watershed*. In collaboration with twelve area environmental organizations, several resident scientists, and a cohort of social justice reviewers, PennFuture outlined this comprehensive framework needed to address water quality concerns.

Clean water funding remains a priority for the state budget season, but we must advance other aspects of the Common Agenda. Stimulus funds under the American Rescue Plan and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts create opportunities to fund many of our budget recommendations.

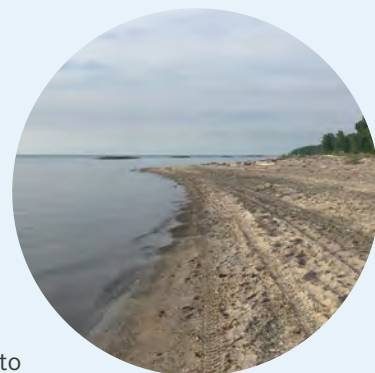
These relate to stormwater management, renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure, orphaned and abandoned oil/gas well plugging, brownfield reclamation, and other commercial and neighborhood development efforts. We will advocate for watershed communities getting their fair share of these funds and for the prioritization of water quality and environment concerns in project implementation.

Recognizing the disproportionate impact of environmental issues and the COVID-19 pandemic on disadvantaged communities and people of color, we seek to ensure stimulus investments and other decision-making processes equitably benefit all communities and promote inclusive decision-making. This includes ongoing involvement in litigation with PennDOT and the US Highway Administration regarding the Bayfront Parkway reconstruction plans that lacked of proper environmental consideration in project design phases and will harm environmental justice communities.

New and improved policy at local and state levels will be essential to placing Lake Erie Watershed communities on a sustainable, long-term trajectory, particularly once stimulus funds are spent. PennFuture and our partners continue to focus on landuse policies that benefit water quality and human health, and legislative safeguards against industrial, fossil fuel, and plastic pollution. With collaboration and shared goals, the Erie region can set itself on a new path, recognizing environmental and human health need not be framed in opposition to economic prosperity. I welcome the input of diverse partners across all sectors as we work toward this vision for our watershed communities.

To remain up to date on our work in the Lake Erie Watershed, please like and follow the recently launched PennFuture – Erie Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages! These pages will cover water quality education, local environmental news and events, and provide local context for our other state and regional work. Be sure to check out our Clean Water Education Week and Lake Erie Watershed celebration posts from this week.

Water is central to the identity of many in Northwest Pennsylvania, and we must work together to protect our most precious resource. Thank you for celebrating Clean Water Education Week and the Lake Erie Watershed with PennFuture. Please consider getting involved in our other efforts to protect Lake Erie and our local communities.





Exhibiting Art and Fighting Climate Change

May 18, 2022 | M. Travis DiNicola, Director of Development

More than 25 years ago I argued in my Master's thesis, for Art Education at Penn State, that art museums should create virtual museums online to increase their accessibility and improve their educational outreach. If I was to write that thesis today it would be somewhat different. First off, I probably wouldn't have to include a chapter on what the "World Wide Web" is or how a hyperlink works. More importantly though, I would devote much of the thesis to how art museums can embrace virtual technology to reduce their carbon footprint.

It's hard to imagine, but back in the mid-nineties there was actually a lot of resistance in the art world to even posting digital photographs of works from their collections online. The concern, for some, was that when an original work of art is "mechanically" reproduced it becomes inferior to the original, destroying what critic Walter Benjamin called its "aura" which diminishes the viewers experience of both the original and the reproduction. Others were worried that the dollar value of original works would be compromised if viewers could "steal" (or copy and save) images. Given the ridiculous growth of the global art market since, currently valued at \$65.1 billion dollars annually, I think the industry is doing just fine.

I thought back to my thesis while reading an article about how the auction house Christie's has created an incredibly realistic hologram of a fragile Degas ballerina sculpture, valued at \$20 million, that they are sending on a virtual world tour. I haven't seen the actual hologram in person but the photograph of it is indistinguishable from a photograph of the original work. It's an amazing use of the technology created by a company called Proto to beam high resolution holograms of actual people around the world. Christie's has chosen to use the tech primarily to reduce shipping and insurance costs, but also, they say, because it reduces their carbon footprint. This is a concern that unfortunately few people in the art world had back in the nineties, when I was in grad school, but is now on the forefront of everyone's mind.

Since I've been with PennFuture I've written a number of blogs about how "EcoArtists" are creating works that use the environment as a subject matter, as a medium, and sometimes as a result of their work. Most recently I hosted an online panel discussion with a number of artists involved in creating the book *EcoArt in Action*. For this article I want to focus specifically on how the exhibitors of art - museums, galleries, and auction houses such as Christie's - are addressing their role in climate change.

Climate change, and its effects, are certainly on the radar of museum professionals today. The Pérez Art Museum, recently built on the bay in Miami and the Whitney Museum of American Art's Renzo Piano, located next to the Hudson River, were both designed to withstand predicted flooding caused by climate change. Last year the New Orleans Museum of Art had to close to the public for a few weeks because of Hurricane Ida and get their



power from emergency generators to keep the steady temperature and humidity needed to protect their collection. Fortunately, because of lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina, they had an extreme weather event plan in place. Other museums have taken notice. Today there is even a regular conference for museum professionals on protecting their collections, and buildings, from increased flooding called Keeping History Above Water.

But what can galleries and museums do to not just protect themselves but to actually reduce their carbon footprint?

Some museums are making significant efforts to be more sustainable, such as getting Leadership in Energy and environmental Design (LEED) certification for their buildings. LEED provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings. In Pennsylvania both the Erie Art Museum and the Barnes Foundation, among others, are LEED certified. Here is a list of the top 17 sustainable museums in the world, including one of my favorites, the Grand Rapids Art Museum in Michigan.

These architectural efforts in building design are extremely important but they don't reduce the amount of energy used to transport art – which is where the art world has the greatest

impact on the environment. The costs for packaging and shipping art (think lots of bubble wrap and crates, cargo ships and airplanes, security and couriers, plus insurance) for a “blockbuster” touring exhibition to museums around the globe can be extraordinary. Individual museums will often pay anywhere from around a hundred thousand to a few million just for the transportation of paintings. Transporting sculptures weighing thousands of pounds can cost even more. The trend of museums offering “immersive” experiences is certainly a result of this consideration – it is much less costly (for the museum and the environment) to project images of Van Gogh on a gallery wall than it is to ship all those artworks to multiple museums. And given their popularity, audiences are apparently okay with not seeing the original if they can walk through a reproduction.

Perhaps the worst climate offenders in the art world are the huge international fairs, such as Art Basel Miami, the Frieze Art Fair in London and New York, and Art Dubai. When you take into account the climate footprint of building temporary exhibition spaces, with energy sucking lighting and climate control, and the thousands of international jet-setters flying in and out to these events, the environmental impact can be devastating. Acknowledging the carbon footprint of the hundreds of art fairs held each year is something the art world has just started to get comfortable in talking about.

Of course exhibitors can’t reduce their footprint unless they know how big it is. One group taking the lead on helping the art world do this is the Gallery Climate Coalition. Their goal is to facilitate the decarbonization of the visual art sector and promote zero-waste practices. This international collective of hundreds of art professionals has a plan to reduce the carbon emissions from galleries, museums, and fairs by at least 50% by 2030 (in line with the Paris Agreement). One way they do this is by providing a free online carbon calculator to determine the footprint of transporting artworks to exhibits, fairs, and festivals. Last November they hosted, online, the conference “Decarbonizing the Art World” and published their “Decarbonization Action Plan”. Most of their suggested actions recognize that the art world is not going to give up the physical object anytime soon and therefore the tips are practical, physical, ways to reduce waste and energy consumption such as using LED lighting, reusable crates, and recycling packing material. They also promote decarbonization through innovation, such as utilizing virtual exhibits.

Though the early concerns from the art world about jeopardizing an artwork’s “aura” have not prevented museums from being online, there were still some who resisted creating virtual exhibitions for a number of years because the poor quality of the technology compromised the visitor’s experience. As the technology improved this became less of an issue, yet many museums still were reluctant to embrace virtual exhibitions because of a fear it

would reduce revenue from in-person visits. What has been encouraging to see during the past two years is that because of Covid restrictions many museums and galleries, who couldn’t open their physical doors, were “pushed” into having virtual versions of their physical exhibits to be able to continue to reach their audiences. A great example of this is “Our Blue Planet: Global Visions of Water” created by the Seattle Art Museum and featuring works from the museum’s permanent collection or on loan from local collectors – minimizing transportation costs of the art.

Something many museums have recently realized was that these virtual exhibits allowed them to reach a far broader audience while reducing exhibition costs and their carbon footprint. In fact, so many arts institutions started to create virtual content during the past two years that Google launched Google Arts and Culture in partnership with them as a response. Here you can “visit” almost every major art museum in the world, including the Met, MoMA, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, without having to get in a plane, train, or car.

Unfortunately the past few years have also seen one of the greatest upheavals in the world of virtual art with the popularity of cryptocurrency and Non-fungible Tokens (NFTs). When I first heard about these “digital markers” and how they could be used to identify the one “original” image in a world of digital copies I was certainly intrigued. For the first time, artists who work in the digital world could make truly unique images that were protected with this certification of authenticity. It sounded like a great idea. I’m not going to dwell on this too much here because I wanted this blog to focus on the positive changes the art world has been making regarding climate change. NFTs are not a part of it. Unfortunately, NFTs are a huge step backwards environmentally because they rely on “blockchains” and the ridiculous amount of energy required to run the computers creating them and cryptocurrency (a much better explanation of how this all works was written by my co-worker, Rob Altenburg). It’s a shame that the amount of money associated with NFTs at this point is so great – literally billions during the past year - that many people are choosing to ignore their environmental impact. Someday there may be a way to sustainably create NFTs, but it is a long way away from today’s technology.

Despite my serious concerns about NFTs I am greatly encouraged by the responsibility that museums and galleries are taking for their role in fighting climate change and reducing their carbon footprint. And I can’t wait to see how this new hologram technology will be used by museums, galleries, and artists to show and create works all around the world without damaging the Earth. It is certainly not something I could have predicted some 25 years ago.



The True Cost of Convenience: The Impacts of Never-Ending Warehouse Development

May 31, 2022 | Donna Kohut, Campaign Manager



There are costs to irresponsible, endless development. The current trend in Pennsylvania's area of the Delaware River Basin is the expansion of massive warehouses and logistics centers. With these projects come the subsequent increase in truck traffic, diesel fumes, infrastructure damage, and stormwater runoff. Warehouses and logistics centers have severe consequences for the health of the surrounding communities and the environment, and very few benefits.

Driven by the convenience (and safety) of online shopping and the expectation of receiving goods within 24 hours of clicking a button, developers are purchasing land for the sole purpose of building these behemoths. Now, the expansion of the warehouse house empire is beginning to branch north from the current distribution hub of the East Coast – the Lehigh Valley.

Folks living in the quiet, rural communities of the Pocono Mountains are witnessing hundreds of thousands of square feet of forest and wetlands get paved over and transformed into cubes of convenient consumption. These communities are shocked and dismayed, fighting to protect the pristine landscape and unique biodiversity that characterizes the region. Oftentimes, they say that they don't want their region to mirror the distribution hub of Lehigh Valley.

And with good reason. Online shopping created a distribution and logistics bubble that's continued to grow for the last ten to fifteen years in the third largest metropolitan area of Pennsylvania. The distribution economy has created over 30,000 jobs across Northampton and Lehigh counties. That's a lot – about 11% of local residents are employed in the industry. But these jobs come at a high price.

While developers are offered tax breaks, taxpayers end up covering the cost of damaged infrastructure and the increased need for municipal services. What's more is that communities that already experience the impacts of pollution, heat deserts, and a lack of green space are exposed to increased diesel fumes from heavy truck traffic. In 2021, Allentown was considered the "Asthma Capital" of the Northeast Mid-Atlantic region, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Their studies show that the combined issues of exposure to industrial businesses and high-traffic roads with a lack of access to asthma specialists primes residents for this illness. Because we know that communities of color more often than not bear the burden of the cumulative impacts of pollution, it should not be surprising that the city's population is 54% Latino and 13% Black or African American. Yes, this industry provides jobs, but at what cost? And to whom?

Some wonder if what's touted as "economic growth" is as robust as it seems. According to local officials in Lower Macungie Township – a community outside of the city of Allentown – "If a warehouse employs 100 people but eats up 100 acres of farmland, the Valley economy only nets one job per acre of precious land lost." This is not an efficient use of land, especially when considering the loss of ecological services provided by that land. The impervious surface – or pavement and buildings – created by warehouses and distribution centers increases storm-water runoff, which then increases the intensity and frequency of flooding. Rather than soil and plants soaking up the rain, the water sheds right off, inundating streets, storm sewers, and creeks. And once again, the communities that experience the most flooding in the Lehigh Valley tend to be Black and brown communities. The environmental impacts continue to accumulate.

It is a different picture in the Poconos, however. There is a lot of open space, fresh air, and clean streams. Wetlands and forests abound – for now.

For Pocono residents, the development of warehouses and distribution centers threatens the character of their rural communities, the health of pristine streams, and the prospect of generational wealth.

Over 30% of Pennsylvania's waterways are polluted and degraded. However, there are pockets of clean, pristine creeks and streams, but they are few. Only 2% of Pennsylvania's waterways are healthy enough to receive the DEP's special designation of Exceptional Value. These are the cleanest, healthiest streams in the state. They have intact and abundant ecosystems and contain pure water. 80% of them can be found in the mountain, wetlands, and forests of the Poconos.

According to an industry white paper, warehouse developers are looking to northeastern Pennsylvania to expand their empire for a few reasons – decrease in unionization of workers, lower wages, low taxes, and the land is cheap and abundant. While all of that is good for profit, it is very bad for the communities and the environment. Recent plans brought in front of municipalities demonstrate a willingness to build along Exceptional Value streams, which if done poorly, could permanently reduce water quality, threaten wildlife, and increase flooding.

The prevalence of warehouses reduces land values. Folks that live in the Poconos tend to have long-term ties to the region. For some, their house and property is their single source of wealth. It's been passed down through their family. But when a warehouse or distribution center abuts the property line, land value suddenly drops.

There are no guarantees that these massive buildings – usually 250,000 square feet or more – will be filled with what's called an "end user". It's all speculative. Developers may pave over wetlands and impair trout streams without ever placing a business in the building. There are some along Route 512 that have stood empty for years. That's likely to continue if Amazon's business trends are any indication. The online shopping giant is starting to lease its space because it is unable to use it. The distribution bubble is on its way to bursting. But because of the flawed land use and development process currently in place, developers don't need to guarantee business in order to build.

Local government officials in the Lehigh Valley and the Poconos realize that land use laws and zoning codes need to change to put an end to this expansion. The Municipal Planning Code was originally established to protect the health, safety, and character of communities. Every municipality must allow for every "use" included in the MPC. However, developers are taking advantage of the term "warehouse". When the term was initially included, distribution centers that take up one million square feet of land and boast 300-400 truck trips were inconceivable. But because the term is included in the zoning codes, the use must be allowed. That's why municipal leaders are calling on state legislators to take action and change the codes.

When we allow for the pervasive and unchecked development of warehouses, we are choosing corporate profits and convenient consumption over healthy communities and a healthy environment.



Renewable Energy Projects Have Our Support, but Not At Any Cost

June 8, 2022 | Abigail M. Jones, Vice President of Legal and Policy

The science of climate change is unimpeachable: society must transition to a clean energy economy to immediately lower our carbon footprint, or face the consequences of irreversible damage to the only home we have.

As Pennsylvania's leading environmental advocacy organization, PennFuture works daily to help achieve that goal in a place that is one of the most notorious carbon polluters in the nation. What that means is fighting against the proliferation of fracking and petrochemicals and beating back attempts in Harrisburg to further tether our economy to heavy industry while advocating for solar and wind energy.

What it doesn't mean, however, is embracing renewable energy at any cost, or allowing developers to create a false dichotomy of pitting renewable energy projects against pristine waters and bountiful forests.

Which brings us to the proposed Swiftwater Solar project in the Poconos, an 80-megawatt solar field that developers intend to build by clearcutting 470 acres of mature woodlands on the top of a mountain right next to an Exceptional Value stream in Pocono Township.

If you've been following PennFuture for a while, you know that our focus in Northeast PA is to help protect the headwaters of the Delaware River Watershed. And the stream at issue here – Swiftwater Creek – is one that we have fought over already, when these same development interests tried to strip away its Exceptional Value protections.

What does it mean to be labeled as Exceptional Value? For starters, only 2 percent of the thousands of streams and creeks in Pennsylvania have that designation based on the exceptional natural water quality and ecological value of the waters. Of that two percent labeled as Exceptional Value or "EV", 80 percent are located in the Poconos. EV streams are unique and valuable resources, including outstanding trout fisheries that provide opportunities for recreation, aesthetic pleasure, and tourism.

PennFuture is in the business of transitioning to a clean energy economy, but we're also in the business of preserving these precious waters for generations to come. That's why PennFuture submitted comments to the Pocono Township board of commissioners asking them to delay a final vote on the project and instead schedule a public hearing so community members and stakeholders could have a meaningful opportunity to present evidence and testimony of the impacts of Swiftwater Solar on the local environment. Unfortunately, the commissioners rejected that request and approved the project at a meeting on June 6.

It's important to note that PennFuture doesn't stand alone in this fight. A poll released by Our Pocono Waters in May found strong support among Pocono residents for protecting the region's cleanest waters: 97% said that it was very important or somewhat important "to protect and maintain Exceptional Value streams



from added commercial development." Throughout the process, Brodhead Watershed Association has been active in voicing its concerns of the environmental impacts of this massive mountain-top project. As well, the Our Pocono Waters campaign submitted a letter at the Planning Commission phase expressing the need for more consideration on potential water quality impacts to the EV Swiftwater Creek. If PennFuture's call for a public hearing would have been headed, these concerns could have been put before the Township Commissioners for consideration. Instead these concerns went unheard, and the project moves forward. The deck was stacked against those who were worried about the impacts of this massive energy development project – as it often is at the land use level.

We realize that Swiftwater Solar was determined to be an "essential service" under the local zoning ordinance and that, as a result, it was a permissible use for this property. We acknowledge that Apex Energy, the designer of the project, is one of the leading green energy companies in the US and we support the work they – and companies like them – do to develop more renewable energy projects across the Commonwealth. We need more solar development in Pennsylvania. But it has to be more thoughtful than that.

We must have responsible renewable energy development. And we must protect sensitive natural resource areas. These must not become mutually exclusive. We must not play into the fallacy that we can only have one. We must not be forced to pit our environmental interests against one another. There are best practices for siting renewable energy projects - and, unfortunately in the case of Swiftwater Solar, we just don't see how clearcutting almost 500 acres of trees on top of a steep mountain in an EV watershed is a good idea.

And so while PennFuture continues to fight for increased renewable energy projects, while we champion our legislature to put money behind the development of large scale solar and wind instead of fracked gas outlets, and while we embrace federal, state, and local laws that encourage renewable energy, we must remain vigilant that renewable energy developers look for thoughtful siting locations and design elements that preserve rather than destroy sensitive natural resources. Pennsylvanians should not be forced into choosing one at the expense of the other.

We Must Continue to Work for Change

July 5, 2022 | Jacquelyn Bonomo, PennFuture President and CEO

Standing on the doorstep to my retirement, announced in February, the last few months have included a lot of reminiscing, reflecting and taking stock.

It's been wonderful to hear from so many dear friends and former colleagues whom I've worked with across the country. You've been so generous with well-wishes and advice about retirement. Those working in our movement — the protection of our planet, its environment, and all that inhabit it — are in pursuit of a “greater good” and come to our work and mission through a profession, an avocation, a passion, a personal imperative.

Mission binds us, and for me, has been a nearly unmatched priority in my life. The opportunity to have done this work has been beyond satisfying, both a privilege and a challenge, and has given me an eco-family, in addition to my birth family.

There have been a small handful of people who have hired me along the way, mentored me, supervised me, just given me a chance, so thank you very, very much. And thank you to the folks that have worked “for” me and always so brilliantly.

As I step away, in this moment, we all have grave concerns. Our democracy, our climate, our freedoms, and future generations are grievously threatened. The environmental movement is realizing intersectionality with other movements. In my opinion, the commonalities that are bringing us together are somewhat tenuous. So what binds us needs to be elevated beyond the matters (racism, ageism, classism, political affiliations, city folk or country folk to name a few) that can pull us back into our separate corners. We need to seek out any and all like-minded entities with whom to work, to build power that can outlast the storms that have always been on the horizon, but that are here now and that cannot be under-estimated.

Here at PennFuture, we've taken important steps to bridge divides. We created new programs around civic participation and democracy, in part to open our organization to issues of concern to communities of color. We've really ramped up our presence in Pennsylvania's mid-sized towns and communities — such as Erie, the Lehigh Valley, and the Pocono northeast. And we are working hard to raise funds to have more of a presence in the north-central heartland counties. These places are strategic to power building, to fight statewide threats that emanate from the underserved and forgotten communities in these locales, and to put us into closer contact with people who can help us figure out how PennFuture can be successful with our work in such a divided state.

The organization I leave is healthy, and stable, and in the stewardship of very competent and committed individuals. 2022 will be an important one for our state, particularly as we approach the fall general elections. After that, we'll know where things stand and this knowledge will enable PennFuture, and our strategic partner Conservation Voters of PA, to build their next strategic plan to address those realities, and threats.

I take great pride in the work PennFuture has done since I came here in 2015. Our thought leadership has been elevated. Our work on greener economic development has made its way into state and federal policy. We are positioned to offer expertise on emerging threats to our climate — the fossil fuel dimensions of bitcoin mining, new hydrogen hubs, refineries, plastics and petrochemical facilities.

A space I have always been personally comfortable in has been in advocacy, and like me, PennFuture has been plain in using our voice and influence to fight against industry's influence on our legislature and our communities. It's not just in sports where “defense” is the headline. So it has been with PennFuture's essential work to fight the onslaught of bad policies, bad proposals, and bad projects — the vast majority to favor fracked gas and other fossil fuels — that just keep coming. Our legal team has elevated its game in response to these threats, and in addition to just fighting hard, is always looking to test ideas and strategies that protect forgotten communities and places against environmental harms.

We've won in the courts. We are moving Pennsylvania forward in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), PennFuture's climate priority since October 2019. And this summer, in the midst of the budget, we are seeing good possibilities for much-needed environmental funding to be realized because of bi-partisan work in the legislature. If this does happen, it will be a cause for celebration, not just for the green economy sectors (agriculture, outdoor recreation and tourism), and land and waters that will benefit, but for the outcome of having all political parties' support for our environment.

Something I've reflected on in these past months, has been the coalition of groups that helped many years ago to “stop” the damming of Nescopeck Creek, sort of my conservation origin story. Involved were people of all political persuasions; there were scientists, hunters, and anglers and Sierra Clubbers, and many more involved. Pennsylvania has a rich natural heritage that for decades was embraced by all. We must return to that place.

That day in 1984 when I made a promise to myself to fight the damming of that free-flowing stream, I did what it took to put that promise into action, and organized, and fought, and won. We must be willing to carry on the fight when necessary, to build bridges where we can and until we change hearts and minds, and our state.

Lastly, for the many, many years that I had the privilege to be in this field, I came to work every day and tried to make something happen, tried to create change. Between the fights, some losses, and wins, I never lost hope that change is possible. This work is a long-term proposition. I feel blessed to help carry the green flame for four decades; and pass it onto others who I know will pursue it with fight, endurance, and hope.



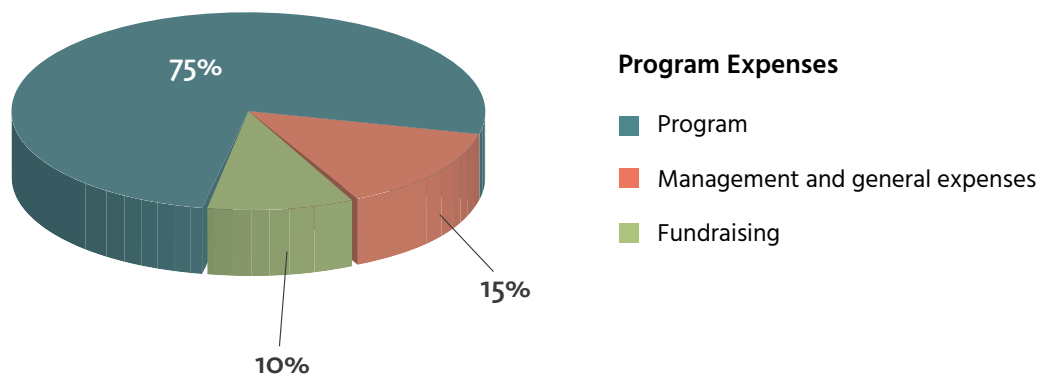
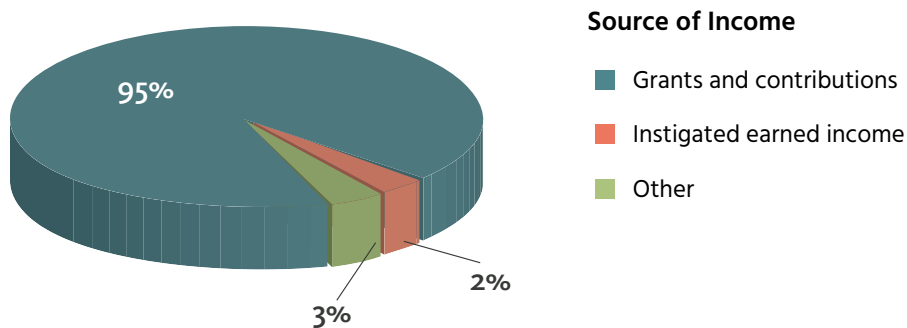
FISCAL YEAR 2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

PennFuture is committed to charitable transparency. This is a summary from the Independent Auditor's Report for the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 2022. Complete audited financial statements for these years, and 990s, are available upon request or by visiting www.pennfuture.org/financial-information. PennFuture participates in **GuideStar**, the premier source for advancing transparency in philanthropy. Financial information is also available at guidestar.org.

Revenues	Category	Notes	Classification	Sources of Income
\$2,218,136	Grants and contributions	includes memberships and non-cash	Philanthropic support	95%
\$52,838	Instigated earned income	includes gross rents, legal fees	Earned income	2%
\$82,713	Other	includes sales of assets and other	Other	3%
*	Accounts accruing interest	investment income	Investment income	0%
TOTAL	\$2,353,687			

*In FY2022 there was no investment gain but an investment income loss of \$430,138

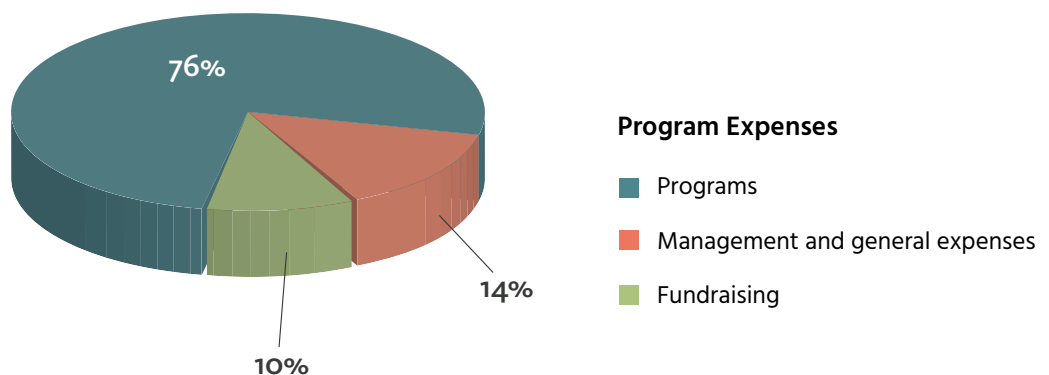
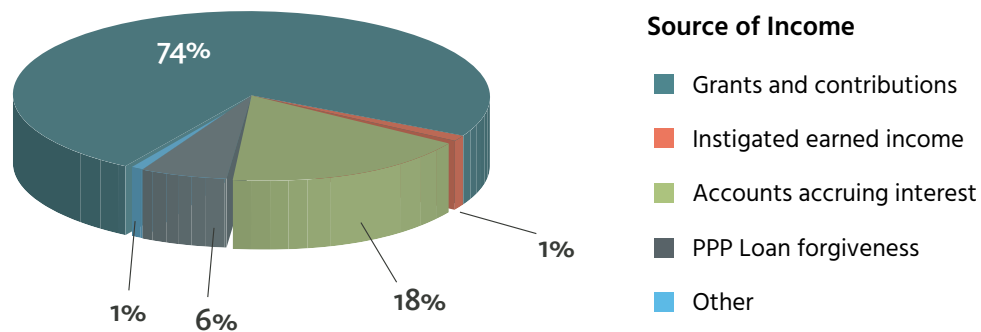
Expenses	Category	Notes	Classification	Program Expenses
\$2,882,673	Program	all programmatic dollars attributed	Program	75%
\$602,185	Management and general expenses	all management and general attributed	Operations	15%
\$386,319	Fundraising	all fundraising attributed	Fundraising	10%
TOTAL	\$3,871,177			



FISCAL YEAR 2021 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenues	Category	Notes	Classification	Sources of Income
\$3,786,643	Grants and contributions	includes memberships and non-cash	Philanthropic support	74%
\$50,055	Instigated earned income	includes gross rents, legal fees	Earned income	1%
\$946,578	Accounts accruing interest	investment income	Investment income	18%
\$310,221	PPP loan forgiveness	Paycheck Protection Plan	Government	6%
\$10,017	Other	includes sales of assets and other	Other	1%
TOTAL	\$5,103,514			

Expenses	Category	Notes	Classification	Program Expenses
\$2,607,752	Programs	all programmatic dollars attributed	Program	76%
\$478,628	Management and general expenses	all management and general attributed	Operations	14%
\$330,708	Fundraising	all fundraising attributed	Fundraising	10%
TOTAL	\$3,417,088			



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We extend our gratitude to each donor who made a gift to PennFuture during our last complete fiscal year, **July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022**. The individuals, organizations, and businesses listed here provide the philanthropic support that makes it possible for PennFuture to do our work. **Each gift makes an impact.**

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