

**American Rivers · Audubon PA · Brandywine Red Clay Watershed Association ·
Brodhead · Watershed Association · Chesapeake Bay Foundation—PA Office ·
Chesapeake Stormwater Network · Clean Air Council · Clean Water Action ·
Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania · Delaware Highlands Conservancy · Eastern
Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) · Interfaith
Partners for the Chesapeake · Lackawanna River Conservation Association ·
Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association · National Parks Conservation Association ·
Natural Resources Defense Council · Nature Abounds · Newtown Creek Coalition ·
PennEnvironment · PennFuture · Pennsylvania Council of Churches · Schuylkill
Headwaters Association, Inc. · Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter · Susquehanna
Greenway Partnership · Tobyhanna/Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Association ·
Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, Inc. · Westmoreland Marcellus
Citizens' Group · White Clay Watershed Association**

June 12, 2017

Re: Opposition to House Resolution 284

Dear Members of the House:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to oppose House Resolution 284. The Resolution seeks to undermine a federally established program to address the significant impacts of municipal stormwater by mischaracterizing the program's requirements and costs, and ignoring its many benefits.

Stormwater is the rain, snowmelt, and other precipitation that runs off solid (impervious) surfaces, collecting pollutants (such as oil, pesticides, sediments, bacteria, and fertilizer) that are on those surfaces, and carrying them into our sewer systems, rivers, and streams. These impacts can threaten public health and safety due to increased risk of flooding, higher levels of pollutants in our streams, decreased opportunities for recreation, swimming, and wildlife uses, as well as economic losses and damaged property. Pollution from stormwater is a primary cause of degradation of Pennsylvania waters.

As a result, urbanized areas, including certain boroughs, cities, towns, and townships, manage their stormwater through a program of the Clean Water Act, known as the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, or MS4, program. The MS4 program, which covers approximately 6,700 permittees nationwide and over 900 in Pennsylvania, helps municipalities address a significant source of pollution in their waterways, remedy chronic flooding issues, and upgrade and maintain critical infrastructure that has been allowed to languish for years.

Regrettably, House Resolution 284 calls on the U.S. Congress to repeal this portion of the Clean Water Act, rolling back over twenty years of efforts to reduce pollution from municipal stormwater around the country and leaving Pennsylvania's municipalities with

little protection from this significant source of pollution and few options to protect citizens from flooding.

In particular, House Resolution 284 mischaracterizes the MS4 program in a number of ways:

- **Pennsylvania's existing Act 167 and Erosion and Sediment Controls programs are not sufficient.** While these Pennsylvania programs provide some standards for new construction and redevelopment projects, they do not address stormwater associated with existing development. Without the MS4 program, municipalities have no ability to address stormwater pollution from legacy development like strip malls and parking lots. Furthermore, these programs have been in place in Pennsylvania for many years and yet, the number of Pennsylvania streams and rivers impaired due to municipal stormwater increases with each assessment. Without additional protections, this trend will only continue and municipalities will be left without the authority to reverse this trend.
- **Failing to consider the benefits of reducing flooding and stormwater pollution.** Stormwater management practices like green spaces, wetlands, and riparian buffers create patchworks of natural areas that provide habitat, flood protection, cleaner air and water, as well as other benefits to local residents and businesses. For example, Lancaster City's stormwater plan is estimated to provide approximately \$4.2 million in energy, air quality, and water benefits across the city annually. Stormwater investments certainly have upfront costs, but the significant local benefits must also be accounted for during policy debates.
- **Failing to recognize opportunities to fund stormwater management.** There is state and federal funding available to address stormwater pollution, including the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, funds related to reducing pollution in the Susquehanna River Watershed, Water Pollution Control (Section 106) grants related to water monitoring, and Section 319 Non-point source Management Program. These funds provide considerable financial support to Pennsylvania. For example, through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Pennsylvania received \$53,460,000 in 2016. Furthermore, many municipalities have implemented stormwater management fees that assess a fee on water users based on the amount of impervious surface on, and thus the amount of runoff generated by, their property. Through a targeted fee system, municipalities can create sufficient funds, in a fair and equitable manner, to address pollution and flooding issues from stormwater without increasing taxes.
- **Ignoring the need to modernize municipal water and sewage infrastructure.** Pennsylvania municipalities have ignored vital infrastructure related to stormwater for decades and these systems are failing, resulting in serious flooding, health, and safety concerns for residents throughout the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania's rivers and streams are important natural legacies that are central to our state economy. Protecting these resources is paramount, and the MS4 program provides municipalities with standards for addressing one of the chief sources of damage to our waters.

We urge you to protect the streams and rivers of Pennsylvania by opposing House Resolution 284.

Sincerely,

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