



September 7, 2017

Re: **Stand up for Keystone, Growing Greener, and farm preservation**

Dear [state representative]:

On behalf of the 75 member organizations of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and their 120,000 contributors, I urge you to resist proposals that would divert funds dedicated to enhancing the health and prosperity of our Commonwealth.

Detailed research and analysis reveals that money cannot be stripped from the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, the Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener), and farmland preservation without devastating consequences.

We respect efforts to find efficiencies wherever possible in state government, but close scrutiny of the numbers and the process for using these funds makes it clear that you cannot take money from these dedicated funds without harming individual projects supported by the funds.

**As things now stand, the funding needs for high-quality community conservation, park, and farmland preservation projects far outstrip the available funds. Likewise, there is a huge backlog of needed State Park and Forest improvements. There is an unambiguous shortage of dedicated fund dollars. Essentially every existing dollar is committed and more are actually needed.**

The consequences of stripping these dedicated funds as proposed include but aren't limited to the following:

- Park and conservation projects that have gone through this year's competitive application review cycle—and which in many cases have taken years to bring to fruition—will not receive state funding.
- Municipalities and charitable organizations that have received grant awards from the state may not be reimbursed for their project expenses (The dedicated funds operate on a reimbursement basis, paying on prior grant commitments after the grantees have incurred their expenses. These reimbursements come from the Treasury accounts from which the proposal would strip money.) A grant contract with the Commonwealth would no longer have legitimacy. (This may be a matter ripe for litigation.) Some projects can take a few years to responsibly bring to completion and final payment-processing by the state; these projects

*Voting Members*  
 Allegheny Land Trust  
 Allegheny Valley Conservancy  
 Allegheny Valley Land Trust  
 Allegheny Valley Trails Association  
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
 Armstrong County Conservancy Charitable Trust  
 Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania  
 Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy  
 Berks Nature  
 Brandywine Conservancy  
 The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation  
 Central Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Centre County Farmland Trust  
 Chestnut Hill Historical Society  
 ClearWater Conservancy  
 The Conservation Fund, Pennsylvania Office  
 Countryside Conservancy  
 Delaware Highlands Conservancy  
 Earth Conservancy  
 East Nantmeal Land Trust  
 Eden Hill Conservancy  
 Edward L. Rose Conservancy  
 Evergreen Conservancy  
 Farm and Natural Land Trust of York County  
 Foundation for Sustainable Forests  
 Fox Chapel Land Conservation Trust  
 French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust  
 French Creek Valley Conservancy  
 Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association  
 Heritage Conservancy  
 Hollow Oak Land Trust  
 Independence Conservancy  
 Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation  
 Lackawanna Valley Conservancy  
 Lancaster County Conservancy  
 Lancaster Farmland Trust  
 The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County  
 Land Conservancy of Adams County  
 Lebanon Valley Conservancy  
 London Britain Land Trust  
 Lower Merion Conservancy  
 Manada Conservancy  
 Merrill Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy  
 Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy  
 Mokoma Conservancy  
 Montour Trail Council  
 Mount Nittany Conservancy  
 Natural Lands Trust  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 Neighborhood Gardens Trust  
 North American Land Trust  
 North Branch Land Trust  
 Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Open Land Conservancy of Chester County  
 Pennsbury Land Trust  
 Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society  
 Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust  
 Pine Creek Land Conservation Trust  
 Pine Creek Valley Watershed Association  
 Pocono Heritage Land Trust  
 The Radnor Conservancy  
 Regional Trail Corporation  
 Schuylkill County Conservancy  
 Somerset County Conservancy  
 Susquehanna Greenways Partnership  
 Tinicum Conservancy  
 The Trust for Public Land  
 The Wallace Trust  
 West Pikeland Land Trust  
 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Westmoreland Conservancy  
 Westmoreland Land Trust  
 Wild Waterways Conservancy Inc.  
 Wildlands Conservancy  
 Willistown Conservation Trust  
 Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association



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should not be threatened with defunding simply because it takes time to do the work right.

- Counties may be forced to renege on preservation contracts with farmers, sticking farmers with costs they incurred to prepare their farms for protection.

The Commonwealth cannot achieve prosperity by cutting investments that bring lasting improvements and benefits to communities in all of Pennsylvania's counties.

**We request your leadership in opposing cuts that reduce or eliminate dedicated funding to projects that safeguard our water and health; create vibrant, family-friendly communities; and protect our local economies and heritage.**

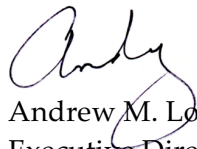
The investments made by the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, Growing Greener, and farmland preservation are proven to bolster the economy. For example, a study on the Keystone Fund found that for every \$1 invested in land and water conservation, \$7 in natural goods and services is returned to Pennsylvania. Several county governments have recently examined the connection between conservation and their economic well-being and found tremendous returns on conservation investments. You can view many of these studies at <http://conservationtools.org/conservation-benefits>

Polls show strong, consistent public support for these investments. A recent Penn State poll found that 97.4% of Pennsylvanians think that state funds dedicated to protecting rivers and streams; conserving open space, forests, natural areas, and wildlife habitats; providing parks and trails; and preserving farmland should continue to be used for these purposes.

The people of Pennsylvania clearly feel that the dedicated funds deliver value and must not be diminished.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Andrew M. Loza  
Executive Director