



# Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White  
Chairman

Patrick Henderson, Executive Director

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May 12, 2009

John Hanger, Secretary  
Department of Environmental Protection  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor Rachel Carson Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Secretary Hanger:

Your press release (*Senate Republican budget will hurt environment, threaten communities' well-being*) is outrageous and insulting.

While the Senate-passed budget contains many difficult funding reductions, it is a plan that requires DEP and other state agencies to do what Pennsylvania families and businesses across the state do on a daily basis: live within their means. It transfers \$100 million from legislative accounts to help fund state programs, including those within DEP, and reduces funding for the legislature by 10%. This builds upon the \$18 million transferred from caucus accounts to fund DEP's Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program after the Governor defunded the program.

The Governor's budget proposal was never realistic; it has become less so as the state's deficit has grown to nearly \$3 billion. Your press release points out several specific funding reductions that deserve to be put in their proper context.

- Eliminating the \$15 million Keystone HELP program:

Your press release fails to note that Pennsylvania is receiving nearly \$130 million under the federal stimulus law for the State Energy Program and the Energy Efficiency Block Grant Program. PA is also receiving over \$220 million for weatherization grants. Your critique is interesting given that the Keystone HELP program is not even administered by DEP after your agency abdicated its responsibility for this program. Furthermore, after criticizing the Senate last June for an Alternative Energy Investment Act which rolled out money "too little, too late", you have failed to distribute the bulk of the first year's funding more than 10 months into the fiscal year.

- Imperiling the Public by Cutting \$1.9 million in West Nile Virus Funding

SB 850 appropriates \$5.193 million for this program. This provides sufficient funding for the \$4.25 million county grant program; in fact the bulk of the money requested by the Governor for this line item was for higher personnel costs, not the county spraying program. Furthermore, the Department has access to its

Clean Water Fund, which currently has approximately \$6 million. Certainly, if this is a priority you believe is unmet in the final budget adopted by the legislature, you can utilize money out of this account for this purpose.

- Cutting \$1.7 million from the Black Fly program

Apparently when Governor Rendell proposed cutting the black fly program entirely only a few years ago, he was being sensible and prudent. Senate Republicans are “failing to protect our citizens”.

- Cutting \$1.4 million from the Flood Control Program

The H2O program, which was crafted by the Senate Republican caucus, allocates \$100 million for flood control projects. Only \$10 million in projects has been applied for. Moreover, in 2005 the Senate Republican caucus amended the law establishing the Environmental Stewardship Fund to specifically permit DEP to utilize the fund for flood control projects.

- Funding cuts for Solar, Wind, Water and Sewer Infrastructure, Mine Reclamation, Etc.

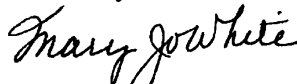
The majority of funds for these types of projects are authorized by the four bonds approved by the General Assembly:

- \$625 million Growing Greener
- \$650 million Alternative Energy Investment Act
- \$800 million H2O Act
- \$400 million PENNVEST water and sewer

None of these bond amounts is reduced in Senate Bill 850. Claims that we have reduced spending for these programs are simply inaccurate.

In closing, it is particularly ironic that Senators who you claim have routinely pressed for budget increases for specific line items are being called hypocritical for making the tough spending decisions necessitated by our budget situation. That is neither accurate nor productive.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee