

# PA Environment Digest

## An Update On Environmental Issues In PA

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Harrisburg, Pa

June 18, 2012

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### **Legislators Continue Push To Protect Keystone Fund**

Citing its value to citizens and communities across the Commonwealth, Reps. William Adolph (R-Delaware) and Kate Harper (R-Montgomery) Wednesday reaffirmed their support for funding the Keystone Recreation, Parks and Conservation Fund.

The lawmakers joined officials from PennEnvironment and the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association for a press conference on the main steps of the Capitol to rally support for the program, also known as Key 93.

"This program plays a tremendous role in helping our local governments defray the cost associated with park and conservation projects that enhance the quality of life for residents all over Pennsylvania," Rep. Adolph, Majority Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, said. "I will continue to be a tireless advocate for this successful program."

"Parks are essential to our communities," Rep. Harper said. "They are a gathering place where community events take place, a low-cost way for families to enjoy the outdoors and a source of opportunity for people to connect with nature."

During the press conference, PennEnvironment Director David Masur presented the lawmakers with thousands of notes from Pennsylvanians across the state who wrote in to share why state parks are so important to them.

The organization launched the initiative to collect the statements in response to the governor's proposed 2012-13 state budget, which would have eliminated Key 93 funding and transfer its present and future revenues to the General Fund to plug holes in the state budget.

The Senate restored half of Key 93's funding in its budget proposal, Senate Bill 1466. When the bill was brought forward in the House, Rep. Adolph offered an amendment to fully restore funding for this vital conservation program which received unanimous support.

"Although budget negotiations are ongoing, support for the program is strong and bipartisan," Rep. Adolph said. "I was happy to offer an amendment to restore full funding for Key 93, and the amendment passed unanimously."

The program was created in 1993 after a statewide referendum vote and is funded by a portion of the state's Real Estate Transfer Tax.

"Our citizens voted to create this program, and it is important that we abide by their

direction and maintain the vital funding Key 93 provides to our communities," Rep. Harper said. "The clear message from the people is to leave the program – and its funding – alone."

To date, Key 93 has helped local communities:

- Support 850 trail projects;
- Conserve 120,000 acres of green space;
- Construct 2,600 community park projects including ball fields, playgrounds, pools, picnic areas and recreation centers;
- Support hundreds of state park and forest improvements; and
- Fund 490 historic preservation projects in 65 counties.