



# PA Environment Digest

*An Update on  
Environmental  
Issues in  
Pennsylvania*

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Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

October 4, 2004

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## They're Back!

The House will join the Senate October 4 for the first voting sessions for both Chambers since they adjourned on July 4. No meetings yet scheduled for the Green Ribbon Commission to consider environmental funding proposals.

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## On the Hill

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### House Committee Hears Comments on Infrastructure Needs

The House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee chaired by Rep. Bill Adolph (R-Delaware) held an informational meeting to review the current state of Pennsylvania's water and wastewater infrastructure needs and issues.

Witnesses from private and public companies and authorities with responsibilities for providing drinking water and wastewater treatment services and environmental groups provided comments to the Committee.

The Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association noted the state has a backlog of over \$8.1 billion in wastewater treatment projects alone. While the need for funding has grown, state and federal revenue sources “have dried up” to provide these services.

The Association recommended the state provide grants, rather than loans, for projects to improve infrastructure and underscored the need for the \$250 million bond issue passed by voters in the Spring to provide water and sewage system funding. That funding, the Association said, should not be tied just to economic development projects.

The Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which represents the 10 county region around Pittsburgh, said there is a pressing need for funding to replace or upgrade over 30,000 on-lot septic systems that are failing or provide no treatment at all for household sewage. They supported a regional approach to deal with water infrastructure problems by sharing innovations, advocating for state and federal funding and targeting development sites.

The York Water Company, representing private water companies, said water systems should be self-sustaining and supported by their own ratepayers and local sources rather than by taxpayers. They should also have plans for both maintenance and growth of their systems. However, changing federal and state requirements put pressure on systems. Preference should be given in government funding to companies and communities who do the necessary planning.

The Delaware County Regional Water Quality Control Authority urged Committee members to act promptly on legislation to distribute the \$250 million bond issue for infrastructure improvements approved by voters in the Spring.

===== **FYI** =====



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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation encouraged members to adopt legislation to distribute the \$250 million bond issue approved this Spring that includes these provisions: the installation of Nutrient Reduction Technology (NRT) at sewage treatment plants in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; the elimination of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) at Pennsylvania sewage treatment plants; the promotion of infrastructure development that is consistent with principles of “Smart Growth,” and preserves farmland and open space; and the support of infrastructure that is consistent with local ordinances and County Comprehensive plans, and planning tools such as local sewage facilities plans.

[Senate Bill 1102](#) (Gordner-R-Columbia) and [House Bill 2690](#) (Weber-R-Montgomery) are currently vehicles for distributing the \$250 million bond issue funds.

### Environmental Bills on House Calendar for Final Action

The House returns to voting session October 4 for the first time since they adjourned early on the morning of July 4. On its Calendar for final action are several environmental bills--

- [Senate Bill 779](#) (Waugh-R-York) Amending the Agricultural Area Security Law to further stipulate the size of agricultural conservation easements and making other changes.
- [Senate Bill 1040](#) (MJ White-R-Venango) establishing the Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education.
- [Senate Bill 1042](#) (Erickson-R-Delaware) creating an Office of Energy and Pollution Reduction in DEP and establishing the Rachel Carson Environmental Excellence Award.
- [Senate Bill 255](#) (Tomlinson-R-Bucks) making changes to the Alternative Fuels Incentive Program.

### In Other News

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#### Statewide Watershed Conference Attracts Over 400

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Watershed Conference in Emmaus attracted over 400 people, including about 100 students, interested in learning more about how to protect their watersheds.

This year’s theme “Watersheds: the Air, Land and Water Connection” gave speakers the opportunity to show how the concept of watershed protection brings together disciplines and concerns that previously were thought of a separate.

Kathleen McGinty, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, provided the keynote speech for the Friday session highlighting the fact that water, more than oil and other natural resources, will be the most precious commodity of the future that has the potential to cause unrest around the world.

She encouraged students at the conference to think twice about going to areas of the country that seem attractive, but their lack of water means they are being built on a false assumption that water will always be there to accommodate high growth.

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McGinty predicted a “boomerang” of growth coming back to Pennsylvania as people and businesses look for water richer areas.

In addition to outlining a list of agency and Administration initiatives on water resources planning, dealing with farm related water quality issues and clean energy portfolio standards, McGinty said DEP is considering a significant reorganization of DEP’s field operations using the watershed model. This approach, she said, will eliminate the “stovepipes” of different permits and planning processes.

McGinty concluded urging conference attendees to contact their legislators and go to Harrisburg to encourage passage of Gov. Rendell’s Growing Greener II environmental spending proposals.

Speakers throughout the program talked about developing and enhancing the partnerships needed for a watershed initiative to be a success and initiatives underway with a variety of organizations to improve the sustainability of watershed groups, like through the [Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers](#) and the Passing Go program by the [Eastern Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation](#).

The Wildlands Conservancy helped host and produce the conference with the help of dozens of volunteer organizers, non-profit, governmental and business sponsors. Visit the [conference webpage](#) for more on who was behind organizing this special event.

### **Stroud Study Proves Riparian Forest Buffers Work to Improve Water Quality**

[A study of 16 streams](#) in eastern North America shows that riparian deforestation causes channel narrowing, which reduces the total amount of stream habitat and ecosystem per unit channel length and compromises in-stream processing of pollutants.

On the other hand, wide forest reaches had more macroinvertebrates, total ecosystem processing of organic matter, and nitrogen uptake per unit channel length than contiguous narrow deforested reaches. Stream narrowing nullified any potential advantages of deforestation regarding abundance of fish, quality of dissolved organic matter, and pesticide degradation.

These findings show that forested stream channels have a wider and more natural configuration, which significantly affects the total in-stream amount and activity of the ecosystem, including the processing of pollutants. The results reinforce both current policy of the United States that endorses riparian forest buffers as best management practice and federal and state programs that subsidize riparian reforestation for stream restoration and water quality.

Not only do forest buffers prevent nonpoint source pollutants from entering small streams, they also enhance the in-stream processing of both nonpoint and point source pollutants, thereby reducing their impact on downstream rivers and estuaries.

The study was a collaboration of authors from the [Stroud Water Research Center](#), the University of Vermont and the [Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia](#).

**NewsClip:** [Natural Buffers Help Water Stay Fit to Drink](#)

### **Small Businesses Can Learn to Cut Energy Costs by Attending Workshops**

Seven regional “[Energy Management Workshops for Small Businesses](#)” have been scheduled to help small businesses learn how to cut costs and improve their bottom line through energy efficiency.

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The workshops are sponsored by the Electrotechnology Applications Center at Northampton Community College and DEP's Small Business Ombudsman.

The half-day workshops are free and will be held on these dates—

- Oct. 5 at DEP's Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Ave., Harrisburg.
- Oct. 14 at DEP's Southeast Regional Office, 2 E. Main St., Norristown.
- Oct. 15 at the U.S. Department of Energy's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office at 100 Penn Square East, Second Floor, Philadelphia.
- Oct. 20 at Meadville Area Industrial Commission, 764 Bessemer St., Meadville.
- Oct. 21 at DEP's Southwest Regional Office, 400 Waterfront Dr., Pittsburgh.
- Oct. 28 at Northampton Community College, 3835 Green Pond Road, Bethlehem
- Nov. 3 at DEP's Northcentral Regional Office, 208 W. Third St., Suite 101, Williamsport.

Brochures and registration forms are available by contacting DEP's Office of Energy and Technology Development at 717-783-8411 or going to the [Energy Management Workshops webpage](#). (*full story*)

### **Penn State Receive \$6.7 Million from NSF for Environmental Kinetics Center**

The National Science Foundation has awarded a team of Penn State researchers \$6.7 million to establish a new center for the study of environmental kinetics.

The grant will establish the [Penn State Center for Environmental Kinetics Analysis](#) (CEKA) to be administered by the Earth and Environmental Systems Institute, in its role as one of the Penn State Institutes of the Environment.

The Center for Environmental Kinetics Analysis will bring together chemists, geochemists, biochemists, soil scientists and engineers to measure and synthesize kinetic data for environmental systems and to promote modeling of the temporal evolution of such systems.

The group will jointly try to answer the question, "How fast do pollutants and natural salts react with minerals in soils and aquifers?" The center will emphasize the problem of how to answer this question using laboratory or computer experiments and then how to scale the answer to natural systems. CEKA hypothesizes that training students to think about environmental problems at several scales of analysis will promote better approaches for analysis of environmental systems.

### **PA Conservation Corps Program Solicits Grant Applications**

Political subdivisions and certain state agencies can start applying for grants under the Pennsylvania Conservation Corps Program.

The deadline for applications is January 7, 2005.

The PCC Program funds work projects in conservation, recreation, historical preservation, graffiti removal and the repair of institutional vandalism.

Go to the [PCC webpage](#) for more information or call 717- 783-6385 or email [pcc@state.pa.us](mailto:pcc@state.pa.us) .

### **EPA Solicits Environmental Education Grants**

EPA has issued the official solicitation notice for the [2005 Environmental Education Grants Program](#) published in the Federal Register on September 15. In addition, grant solicitation period notifications have been distributed to almost 400 environmental educators and organizations throughout the region.

Grant proposals are due by November 15.

EPA traditionally appropriates close to \$3 million annually for this program, but since the appropriation for the 2005 grant program is yet to be determined, the notice advises potential grant applicants to periodically refer to the Environmental Education website for updated information.

### **2005 MSI Engineering Sustainability Conference Call for Papers**

The [2005 MSI Engineering Sustainability Conference](#) will be held in Pittsburgh on April 10-12, 2005. The Conference is now soliciting papers in all subject areas dealing with green construction and the sustainable use of water. To qualify for acceptance, you must submit a one-page abstract by e-mail to [msi@engr.pitt.edu](mailto:msi@engr.pitt.edu) on or before October 15, 2004. (from [Green Building Alliance of Pittsburgh](#))

### **CMU Partner Researching New Process for Creating Biodiesel**

[Capital Technologies](#) out of Carnegie Mellon University has developed a new process for creating biodiesel that is more efficient than previous methods. This method doesn't use a caustic catalyst and reduces the processing cost to 13-19 cents per gallon above the cost of the organic oil. The end result meets ASTM and European Union specs. Capital Technologies' customers in the EU have already offered to purchase 120 million gallons of biodiesel per year, the equivalent to 24 five million gallon per year factories! For more information contact [Bruce Polatnick](#). (from [Green Building Alliance of Pittsburgh](#))

### **Green Building Tour Kicks Off on Saturday, October 2**

The NESEA Green Buildings Open House happens this Saturday, October 2 from 10 am to 4 pm providing the public with the opportunity to see hundreds of green homes and buildings. This annual event offers a unique opportunity for people to see firsthand how clean energy and green building practices can be put to work. The [North East Solar Energy Association \(NESEA\)](#) is organizing the Green Buildings Open House for the North East, with the [Green Building Alliance of Pittsburgh](#) as a local organizer.

### **October 25 is Hydrogen Day at Penn State**

On October 25, [Hydrogen Day at Penn State](#) will feature more than [30 poster presentations](#) offering details on the latest research results on hydrogen production, storage and use as well as related topics.

In addition to the poster presentations, there will be two panel sessions -- one with industry leaders and another with academic researchers. Industry participants will include Ed Kiczek, product development manager, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.; George

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Sverdrup, technology manager, National Renewable Energy Laboratory; George Parks, senior principal scientist, ConocoPhillips; and Matt Younkens, research engineer, Ford Motor Company.

The discussion on current academic research will include Dr. Digby Macdonald, distinguished professor of materials science and engineering and director of the Center for Electrochemical Science and Technology; Dr. Thomas Mallouk, DuPont professor of materials chemistry; Dr. Matthew Mench, assistant professor of mechanical engineering; Dr. Peter Eklund, professor of physics and materials science; and Dr. Bruce Logan, director of the Hydrogen Energy Center and The Kappe professor of environmental engineering.

Kathleen McGinty, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, will be the luncheon keynote speaker. Congressman John Peterson, a member of the House Appropriations Committee and the House Resources Committee, will be the dinner speaker. Peterson is a leading proponent of hydrogen research and policies to help reduce American's dependence on foreign energy.

Hydrogen Day is a program of Penn State's Hydrogen Energy Center. Dr. Bruce Logan, Hydrogen Energy Center director, says, "Hydrogen Day will bring together industry, government and academic leaders in the field at an exciting time. As our national energy policy continues to evolve, this gathering can help to clarify our country's needs as well as to explore technical solutions to development of a hydrogen economy."

The registration fee is \$75 before October 5 and \$125 thereafter. For more information visit the [Hydrogen Day webpage](#) or contact the Industrial Research Office at 814-865-9519 or [iro@psu.edu](mailto:iro@psu.edu) by email.

### Measuring Progress: EPA's Environmental Indicators Initiative

EPA's "Environmental Indicators Initiative" was started in 2003 to improve the Agency's ability to report on the status of and trends in environmental conditions and their impacts on human health and the nation's natural resources.

The Indicators Initiative also identifies where additional research, data quality improvements, and information are needed. EPA's long-term goal is to improve the indicators and data that are used to guide the Agency's strategic plans, priorities, performance reports, and decision-making.

The first Indicators report covered five different issue areas: cleaner air; purer water, better protected land, human health and ecological conditions.

To get the details, visit the [Environmental Indicators webpage](#).

### Piñero Appointed as Federal Environmental Executive

President Bush has appointed Edwin Piñero to serve as the [Federal Environmental Executive](#) (FEE) the White House announced on September 23. Mr. Piñero had served as Deputy FEE since January 2003, and had assumed the role of Acting Federal Environmental Executive in June 2004 upon the departure of John Howard.

"I am honored and privileged for the opportunity to serve as Federal Environmental Executive, and look forward to continuing on our mission of promoting sustainable environmental stewardship across the Federal government" said Piñero.

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Previously, Mr. Piñero was owner of Piñero Consulting, an environmental management consulting firm in Pennsylvania. From 1998 to 2001, he worked in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as Director of the Bureau of Environmental Sustainability as well as the State Energy Director in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

Over his 22-year career, Mr. Piñero has worked for various environmental consulting firms, taught graduate courses in environmental management for Duquesne University, and was a geologist with Mobil Oil Corporation. He has a Bachelors Degree in Geology from the State University of New York, and a Masters Degree in Geology from Texas A&M University.

### Quick Clips

[Reliant Dedicates Seward Waste-Coal Burning Plant](#)  
[Gov. Rendell Helps Dedicate Seward Waste-Coal Plant](#)  
[DEP, Coal Industry Ask EPA for Meeting on Mercury Rule](#)  
[CMU Gets \\$6.9 Million Grant to Study Climate](#)

### Taking Positive Action

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#### Looking for Fall Projects? Try Backyard Conservation

Just as they do on the farm, conservation practices on nonagricultural land can help increase food and shelter for birds and other wildlife, control soil erosion, reduce sediment in waterways, conserve water and improve water quality, inspire a stewardship ethic, and beautify the landscape.

"[Backyard Conservation](#)" shows you how conservation practices that are used on agricultural land across the country to conserve and improve natural resources can be adapted for use on the land around your home. These practices help the environment and can make your yard more attractive and enjoyable.

Whether you have acres in the country, an average-sized suburban yard, or a tiny plot in the city, you can help protect the environment and add beauty and interest to your surroundings. Ten conservation practices have been scaled down for homeowners and city residents to use in their yards.

Tip sheets offer "how to" steps and helpful hints on the following practices: [Backyard Pond](#); [Backyard Wetland](#); [Composting](#); [Mulching](#); [Nutrient Management](#); [Pest Management](#); [Terracing](#); [Tree Planting](#); [Water Conservation](#); and [Wildlife Habitat](#).

#### [Penn State Cooperative Extension Publications on Wildlife Conservation](#)

### Watershed NewsClips

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[Floods Renew Question of Dams](#)  
[Development Blamed for Flooding](#)  
[Sprawl May Harm Health Study Finds](#)  
[Infection from Flood Water Fatal to Firefighter](#)



[Volunteers Weed Blue Mountain](#)  
[Op-Ed: Development Made Floods Worse](#)  
[Flood Controls Can be Overwhelmed](#)

## **Regulations**

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**Oct. 7 - Independent Regulatory Review Commission** will consider Environmental Quality Board #7-380: Stream Redesignations (Brushy Meadow Creek, et al.)

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – October 2, 2004](#)      [Comment Deadlines Open](#)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations](#)      [Status of Regulations, 6-Month Calendar](#)

## **Technical Guidance & Permits**

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DEP provided [notice this week](#) that it is removing one policy from its inventory:

DEP ID: 580-3000-001. Title: Deep Mine Safety Program Guidance Manual.  
Description: The Bureau of Deep Mine Safety Program Guidance Manual (manual) is a comprehensive collection of internal guidelines for use by Bureau of Deep Mine Safety (Bureau) staff.

DEP also [provided notice of its intent](#) to issues several general plan approvals for Best Available Control Technology in the Air Quality Program covering diesel engines, nonroad vehicles and certain fugitive emissions.

[For copies of Draft Technical Guidance](#)      [For copies of Final Technical Guidance](#)

## **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

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- [DEP Announces Regional Water Resources Committee Meetings for October](#)
- **Oct. 5** – House Local Government Committee to consider [House Bill 2189](#) (Ross-R-Chester) allowing local governments to cooperate with
- **Oct. 5** – House Transportation Committee to consider [House Bill 2696](#) (Reichley-R-Berks) related to emissions inspection program.
- **Oct. 5** – House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee meeting on Geographic Information Systems and PaMAP.
- **Oct. 6** – Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to consider report on emissions inspection fees.
- **Oct. 7 - Independent Regulatory Review Commission** will consider Environmental Quality Board #7-380: Stream Redesignations (Brushy Meadow Creek, et al.)

[DEP Calendar of Events](#)      [Watershed Events](#)

## **Helpful Web Links**

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[Daily NewsClips](#) [Weekly DEP Update](#) [GreenTreks Network](#) [Watershed Weekly](#)  
[DEP Press Releases](#) [DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas](#)

## **Contributions Invited**

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Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - [DHess@HolstonCrisci.com](mailto:DHess@HolstonCrisci.com) .

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