

PA Environment Digest

An Update on Environmental Issues In Pennsylvania

Edited By David E. Hess, Holston & Crisci

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The Capitol Building and Administration offices were half empty this week with many folks going to Democratic National Convention in Boston. As a special feature, we included Gov. Rendell's address to the Convention on energy issues.

We also included two different updates released by members of the House this week on the Growing Greener environmental funding initiative.

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On the Hill

Senate Environmental Committee Sets Hearing on Timber Theft

The Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee has scheduled an August 25 public hearing in Franklin on the issue of timber theft.

The Committee, chaired by [Sen. Mary Jo White](#) (R-Venango), is looking into whether legislation is needed to deter what is becoming a significant problem in Northwest Pennsylvania.

Joint Committee Holds Forestry Task Force, Aquaculture Meetings

The [Joint Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee](#) has scheduled two meetings in upcoming weeks.

On August 20 the Committee will meet in Mount Pocono for a public hearing on the aquaculture industry.

On August 26 the Forestry Task Force of the Joint Committee will meet in State College to review issues related to forest management.

Two Updates on the Growing Greener Environmental Funding Initiative

Please find below two updates on the Governor's Growing Greener environmental funding initiative put out this week by Rep. William Adolph (R-Delaware, Majority Chairman of the House Environmental Resources Committee and House Democratic Leaders Rep. William DeWeese (D-Greene) and Rep. Michael Veon (D-Beaver)

Rep. Adolph "Growing Greener Update"

"As chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee I am committed to protecting and preserving Pennsylvania's natural resources.

"The original Growing Greener program – the largest single investment of state funds for conservation and preservation in Pennsylvania history – was a Republican effort enacted in 1999 to provide \$645 million in funding over five years to protect the state's natural resources. Since then the program has been extended to 2012 with funding from a \$4 per ton tipping fee on landfill waste.

"This year, Gov. Ed Rendell proposed floating an \$800 million bond and increasing certain business fees to increase funding for environmental programs. Although I agree we need to continue doing more to protect our dwindling natural resources, I, along with many of my colleagues, had concerns about how the governor proposed to finance the program expansion.

"House Republicans instead proposed paying for Growing Greener programs as we go to avoid the potential pitfall of spending the bond proceeds in four or five years, and then having taxpayers spend the next 20 years paying off the \$800 million loan.

"In an effort to find other ways to solve our environmental funding concerns, House and Senate leaders, along with the administration, are creating a "Green Ribbon Commission." The commission will study and develop recommendations for

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environmental programs and determine the best funding options and report back this fall.

“This will allow enough time that if a bond does need to be floated, a ballot question can be developed for the spring 2005 primary.

“While many would have you believe that the General Assembly ignored the environment entirely, our new state budget proves otherwise.

“House Republicans included \$14.6 million to fund Waste Tire Recycling Grants, Safe Drinking Water Grants and the Senior Environmental Corps. The governor's initial budget proposal eliminated the funds for these programs.

“House Republicans helped secure an additional \$1.5 million in state funds for the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, the Delaware River Basin Commission, the County Conservation Corps and Mushroom Nutrient Management. Republicans maintained the dedicated funding for Growing Greener.

“In actual dollars, the Department of Environmental Protection received a \$17 million increase over the governor’s budget proposal. We allocated an additional \$2 million to Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to help with the state parks and community parks.

“House Republicans are committed to meeting Pennsylvania's environmental needs today, tomorrow and 50 years from now. Through the Green Ribbon Commission the House, Senate and administration will work cooperatively to see that we continue on the path first set forth in the Growing Greener initiative in 1999.”

Reps. DeWeese & Veon “Green Sense”

“Since its introduction in February, House Democrats advocated Governor Ed Rendell’s Growing Greener II initiative as the best and most responsible way to invest in Pennsylvania’s economy, preserve our environment and create new, high-quality jobs all across the state. From February until recently, House and Senate Republicans played partisan politics and criticized the governor’s forward-thinking proposal.

“We didn’t understand the criticism at the time given the fact the same Republicans suggested borrowing \$5.3 billion over the past six years for similar environmental projects. Governor Rendell was only asking voters to approve the same idea.

“On July 4, as lawmakers were voting on the state budget and the means to provide \$1 billion in property tax relief to Pennsylvanians, House Majority Leader Sam Smith and Senate Majority Leader David Brightbill penned a letter to Governor Rendell, suggesting the establishment of a “Green Ribbon Commission” to jointly study and develop recommendations for environmental programs and to determine the best funding options.

“We were happy to hear it. And we were extremely delighted to hear the Republican leaders say they would help put an environmental bond issue before the voters on the 2005 primary election ballot.

“While we are pleased leaders Smith and Brightbill opened the door to discussion and action to expand and enhance environmental stewardship in Pennsylvania, we would be remiss if we did not respond to Leader Smith’s July 20 commentary that called the governor’s plan “short on details.”

“From cabinet secretaries’ public testimony to tours around the state to materials to lawmakers, details of the plan have been available for quite some time and abound in a variety of places. Pennsylvanians (and GOP lawmakers) also can get all the details they want by visiting www.growinggreener2.com.

“Let’s stop the blame game and move forward. Lawmakers from both parties have looked to make our state a true leader and innovator in the fields Governor Rendell addresses in his Growing Greener II initiative. House Democrats were happy to sponsor the legislation to kick-start the debate.

“And we are equally happy to join our Republican colleagues in creating the “Green Ribbon Commission” so that we can get to work on a plan that will ensure that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren can enjoy the environment and a sound economy, just as William Penn envisioned.”

In Other News

Recycling Officials Hold Annual Conference, Concern Expressed for Future

Over 220 enthusiastic recycling officials and recycling and compost industry representatives attended the 14th annual statewide recycling conference in Wilkes-Barre this week organized by the [Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania](http://www.prop.org) (PROP).

In addition to more than two dozen workshops, plenary sessions and PROP’s annual dinner, graduation ceremonies were held for over 30 individuals who completed either the first level courses to be a certified recycling professional or the senior certification program.

[PROP’s certification program](http://www.prop.org) overall has attracted over 680 participants and will soon go online shortly with its training program to serve anyone with Internet access.

Of significant concern to many attendees was the financial condition of the state’s Recycling Fund which this year will provide over \$68 million to support local recycling and composting, county waste planning and host municipal inspector programs.

Although the \$2 per ton Recycling Fee supporting the program will not sunset until January 2009, DEP has estimated the last full round of 902 recycling set up grants it can offer will be in fiscal year 2005-06 which starts July 1, 2005. In 2006-07 the Fund will start to show a deficit of \$589,000 increasing to \$37.6 million in 2008-09 due primarily to the payoff of recycling grants for the two previous years.

PROP leadership will be meeting to develop a strategy for dealing with the Recycling Fund issues. In addition, DEP will be discussing this issue at the next [Recycling Fund Advisory Committee](http://www.prop.org) meeting on August 12.

DEP is planning to offer a \$20 million round of new 902 recycling set up grants later this year and will make an announcement of the current year’s 902 grants, which resulted in 200 applications for \$49 million in grant funds, in the near future.



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Conference attendees also heard an update of the next phase of the [Waste Characterization Study](#) DEP started three years ago. The first phase identified opportunities for additional recycling, including composting organics, collecting and marketing more fibers (newspaper and cardboard) and noted changes in the waste stream itself since Pennsylvania's Recycling Act was passed in 1988.

For example, many more containers are now plastic rather than glass and even plastic containers are 22 percent lighter than they were just 10 years ago.

The dilemma presented by these changes means the traditional measures of success for recycling programs – tons collected and taken out of the waste stream – is no longer an accurate measure. Alternative measures, primarily pointing out the energy, economic return on investment and other environmental benefits of recycling, need to be more fully developed.

The current phase of the Study is looking in detail at the efficiencies and opportunities in local material recovery facilities (MRFs) which should be available after September and DEP's review.

Several speakers pointed to the need to make recycling programs more sustainable by capturing as much revenue as possible from the recyclable material collected. The example of [Minneapolis recycling program](#) was highlighted which recently bid out the recyclables it collects and generated more than \$6.1 million in revenue, enough to pay for their recycling program.

PROP is lead by President Chuck Raudenbush, Waste Management, Inc., Lori Robson, Northern Tier Solid Waste Management Authority, Vice-President, Joanne Shafer, Centre County Solid Waste Management Authority, Treasurer, Amy Mazzella di Bosco, Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority, Secretary and Tanya McCoy-Caretti, Cambria County Solid Waste Authority, Committee Chair.

Watch for Nomination Forms for 2004 Waste Watcher Awards

On August 3 nomination forms will be posted on the PROP website for the 2004 [Waste Watcher Awards Program](#). Nominations are due October 1.

The Waste Watcher Program recognizes outstanding recycling, waste reduction, reuse and composting programs from across the state. Awards are presented yearly to municipalities, counties, private businesses, hospitals and community organizations.

Award announcements will be made November 15.

The Waste Watcher Awards are a partnership of [Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania](#), [Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association](#), the [Keystone Chapter of Solid Waste Association of North America](#) and DEP.

Controls on Fine Particulate Matter to be Discussed at Air Committee

At the August 10 [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting DEP will be reviewing its position and make a recommendation on how it plans to proceed with issues surrounding the EPA's designation of 22 counties as nonattainment areas for PM 2.5.

September 1 is the deadline for DEP's response to the proposed designations.

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DEP has disagreed with [EPA's recommendation](#) of at least six of the 22 counties EPA included in its designation and is expected to submit comments suggesting they be changed.

This discussion is important because to meet the new standard additional controls on sulfur dioxide, ammonia, nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compounds may be needed, although the precise degree of control has not yet been established.

The counties DEP recommended were: Allegheny, Beaver, Delaware, Berks, Cambria, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Philadelphia, Washington, Westmoreland and York. EPA added Armstrong, Butler, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence and Mercer.

DEP has [raised other concerns](#) with the designations. DEP argues EPA did not fully disclose and subject to public review the entire process they were using to make the designations, included areas in Pennsylvania for reasons other than air quality concerns directly in those counties and did not factor in regional emission reduction strategies.

PM 2.5 pollution in Pennsylvania is also heavily influenced by pollution coming in from other states on particulate matter, just like ozone pollution. So what happens in other states has a big impact here.

The Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, a regional economic development group in Western Pennsylvania, has weighed in on this issue as well, saying in a letter to DEP—

“The Growth Alliance strongly supports efforts to improve air quality in southwestern Pennsylvania. However, most of the monitors in southwestern Pennsylvania that exceed national standards do so by only small amounts, and this is likely due to pollution from other states, not from our region.

“Recent studies at Carnegie Mellon University show that 80% of PM 2.5 in southwestern Pennsylvania is coming from sources outside of our region. Moreover, the only area in southwestern Pennsylvania that is significantly exceeding the standard is the Monongahela Valley, due to a unique combination of local emissions, conditions, and monitor placement.”

The Growth Alliance recommended a separate nonattainment area for southern Allegheny County and to remove Armstrong, Butler, Greene, Indiana, and Lawrence counties. They also suggest Beaver, Washington, and Westmoreland, and the portion of Allegheny County outside of the Monongahela Valley, should not be designated as nonattainment, but should be designated as ‘overwhelming transport’ or ‘transitional’ areas.

In addition, the Growth Alliance recommends EPA, “move aggressively to adopt and implement national regulations to address transport. The current deadline means that more than a decade will pass before such controls are in place, yet EPA is proposing that local areas come into attainment within five years.”

EPA hopes to finalize the designations in November, followed in 2005 by finalizing the rule telling states how they must go about developing plans to achieve the standard. States must then submit the plans in 2008 after extensive inventory and modeling work.

Also on the advisory committee's agenda is an update on a variety of clean air programs (8-hour ozone pollution standard, regional haze, mercury reduction requirements, a regional multi-pollutant strategy with the Northeast Ozone Transport

Commission to coordinate the requirements of various air programs), a proposed air quality enforcement policy, review of New Source Review options and a discussion of DEP's air permit streamlining project.

DEP Offers Comments to EPA on Rule to Reduce Regional Haze

On July 15 DEP submitted formal comments to EPA on a [Best Available Retrofit Technology \(BART\) rule](#) designed to reduce regional haze.

The BART rule was proposed by EPA to address air emissions that cause a reduction in visibility in and around national parks and scenic areas. The proposed rule requires sources built between 1962 and 1977 and larger than 250 Megawatts and would potentially require sources to retrofit their facilities with new controls to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions and implement year-round nitrogen oxide controls (seasonal controls are in place now).

DEP objected to the methods used by EPA to allowed states to exempt certain sources from the rule based on their individual contributions to visibility impairment. They supported EPA's proposal for relatively strong levels of presumptive control for sulfur dioxide emissions. DEP also said it supported a "top-down" approach for performing the BART engineering analysis where the most stringent control technology would be selected unless it cannot be justified on a technical basis.

DEP also pointed to the need to coordinate the BART requirements with the Clean Air Interstate Rule EPA proposed which set separate reductions in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. DEP recommended the year-round operation of Selective Catalytic Reduction controls and the installation of those controls where they are not yet installed to better control nitrogen oxides.

DEP is also sending letters to the 60 or so sources affected by the regional haze requirements and BART rule in the very near future asking them to confirm they are covered by these rules.

To help coordinate regional solutions to a regional problem, Pennsylvania joined a new interstate group called the [Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union \(MANE-VU\)](#) which met on July 24. Eleven states, the District of Columbia, and two Indian Tribes are members. The MANE-VU board adopted interim operating guidelines and received a report on potential control technology for the electric utility industry.

Two other regional organizations, the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association will assist MANE_VU with technical analysis of haze issues.

[State plans for controlling regional haze](#) are due in 2008, assuming the BART rule is finalized on time.

Report Details Impacts of Manure on Bay, Changes in Dairy Feed Recommended

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation this week issued a report recommending new funding for programs designed to reduce nutrient pollution in the Bay by changing the formula for livestock feeds to address what it considers to be the most significant cause of nutrient pollution in the Bay -- manure.

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Nutrient pollution is the single largest threat to water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Sources of nutrient pollution include urban runoff, industry, automobiles, and human sewage, but the largest source is agriculture and, increasingly, from the manure produced by livestock, which now outnumber the watershed's human population by 11 to 1.

Agriculture is the source of approximately 50 percent of the nitrogen and 60 percent of the phosphorus that Pennsylvania contributes to the Chesapeake Bay. In contrast, industrial discharges, wastewater treatment plants and other point sources combined contribute approximately 11 percent of the nitrogen and 19 percent of the phosphorus.

Animal manure is one of the largest sources of the nitrogen and phosphorus deposited on the Bay watershed's 64,000-square-mile land area. According to data compiled by the Chesapeake Bay Program, animal manure accounted for 40 percent of the total nitrogen and 54 percent of the total phosphorus deposited on the land - which has a limited capacity to absorb and retain it, and in many places has already exceeded that capacity. That pollution has seriously damaged the health of local rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay region has three of the nation's biggest manure "hot spots," according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture: Sussex Co., DE (on the Delmarva Peninsula) ; Rockingham Co., VA (in the Shenandoah Valley); and Lancaster Co., PA (in the lower Susquehanna River Basin).

Lancaster County has the second-highest agricultural production of any county east of the Mississippi River and ranks fifth in livestock production nationally. The county, which represents only 1.5 percent of the area in the watershed, produces more nitrogen from manure than any other county in the Bay's drainage area - 72 million pounds a year, about 12 percent of the total nitrogen from all manure sources in the watershed.

Pennsylvania's cows, chickens, hogs and other livestock produce approximately 30 million tons of manure per year, containing approximately 171,000 tons of nitrogen and 81,000 tons of phosphates. This manure is an asset for crop production, if applied at the time, location and rate needed by crops. When nitrogen and phosphorus are not effectively used by crops, their role in the environment changes from productive nutrients to pollutants of groundwater and surface water.

Lancaster County has 140,705 beef cattle; 105,155 dairy cows; 323,998 swine; 12,909,691 layers; 8,027,873 broilers; and 119,607 turkeys.

The CBF report makes several recommendations—

1. The most achievable pollution reductions from agriculture right now are through more efficient feed management that prevents the pollution from being in the manure in the first place. Research has shown that improved dairy feed management could achieve pollution reductions of up to 40 percent while saving the struggling dairy industry \$18 million per year. Pennsylvania contains 64 percent of the dairy cows in the Chesapeake watershed.

2. The Pennsylvania General Assembly should include \$10 million in funding for a dairy feed efficiency program. This funding will be part of a greater need for agricultural funding in Pennsylvania's next legislative session Pennsylvania should

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establish a dairy feed efficiency pilot program in Lancaster County to develop and refine the mechanisms for the program.

3. CBF will sponsor a dairy feed efficiency summit in October of this year to bring together dairy farmers, milk cooperatives, feed mills, government agencies, and university researchers to craft the structure of the program.

Animal feed makers have been researching the impact of feed formula changes in nutrient content of manure for several years. In [1999 Wenger Feeds](#) was given a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for its production of an enzyme that reduced phosphorus in manure by 24 percent.

For more information on the report, see the [Manure Report on the CBF webpage](#) or contact Kelly O'Neill, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Old Water Works Building, 614 N. Front Street, Suite G, Harrisburg, PA 17101, (717) 234-5550; email: koneill@cbf.org.

NewsClip: [Chesapeake Bay Needs Protection From Manure](#)

Chesapeake Bay Program Adopts New Indicator to Track Sprawl

States pledged to slow harmful sprawl by 30 percent when signing the Chesapeake 2000 agreement. To track sprawl, the Chesapeake Bay Program adopted impervious surfaces as its new measurement of "harmful sprawl."

Impervious surfaces like roads and rooftops prevent rainwater from naturally entering soils, and rapidly transfer pollution to local streams. Impervious cover increased in acres between 1990 and 2000. Reducing the rate 30 percent will save many acres from becoming impervious.

The new indicator, "Chesapeake Bay Watershed Development Trends," can be viewed at the [Chesapeake Bay Program website](#).

EPA Region Announces New Approach to Controlling Nutrients

EPA Region 3 unveiled its draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [permitting \(NPDES\) approach for discharges of nutrients](#) in the Chesapeake Bay in a July 16 letter to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

The proposed approach will require NPDES permits to match the requirements in the state tributary strategies - the comprehensive plans to cut nutrient pollution into the Bay.

More than 300 wastewater treatment plants in the watershed are expected to need permits requiring total reductions of more than 20 million pounds of nitrogen annually.

Comments are due September 15.

20th Anniversary of Pennsylvania Conservation Corps Celebrated

The Department of Labor & Industry this week celebrated the establishment of the [Pennsylvania Conservation Corps](#) during the group's 20th anniversary ceremony at the State Capitol.

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The PCC was established in 1984 to improve the employability of young adults while accomplishing much needed conservation, recreation and historical preservation projects on the state's public land.

Participating in the ceremony were former PCC Director Don Mathis, 160 current PCC members and 50 crew leaders who shared in a cake-cutting celebration honoring the 20th anniversary.

State's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas Survey Needs Volunteers

The Pennsylvania Game Commission and Carnegie Museum of Natural History are looking for both casual and avid birdwatchers to help monitor nesting wild birds in the 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas.

The 2nd Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas is the most extensive survey of the state's nesting birds ever attempted. Started this spring, the grid-based survey will continue for the next five years and aims to track the changes that have occurred in bird populations since the first atlas was completed. Since that time, eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons have expanded their breeding numbers substantially. Also of interest will be charting whether the long-term declines of many of songbirds reported in the first atlas continues.

Although it follows and largely replicates the first atlas, which was conducted in Pennsylvania from 1983 to 1989, the second atlas project will provide new levels of understanding for the state's bird populations that will help to ensure their conservation now and in the future. It is funded largely with federal State Wildlife Grant monies through the Game Commission and organized and coordinated by Carnegie Museum of Natural History through offices at the museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve.

The original Atlas was done with help from more than 2,000 volunteers. There are more than 4,900 blocks to cover Pennsylvania's about 45,000 square miles, but it quickly becomes apparent that more volunteer help is critically needed.

Field work for the Atlas began in January by a core group of knowledgeable and hard-working regional coordinators who are responsible for recruiting and organizing volunteer birdwatchers in each of Atlas' 57 rectangular regions across the state. Most coordinators have 75 to 100 survey blocks that must be monitored by volunteer birdwatchers over the next five years.

When it's finished in 2008, the second Atlas will show changes in the occurrence and distribution of the state's nearly 200 species of nesting birds, and promises to provide much additional information about the state's breeding birds.

The use of technologies, such as global positioning satellites and geographic information systems –unavailable when data for the first Atlas was collected – are expected to improve the survey.

But success in getting to the finish line, and the quantity and quality of data collected, will be directly influenced by the number of volunteers who participate, especially covering blocks in rural Pennsylvania.

To date, about 750 volunteers have registered and begun helping in more than 1,400 blocks in the second Atlas survey.

Additional funding for the Atlas has been provided by the Wild Resource Conservation Fund, and in-kind and other assistance is being provided by state

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Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' bureaus of Forestry and State Parks, Pennsylvania Audubon, Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, Penn State Cooperative Wetlands Center, Penn State Institutes of the Environment, Penn State School of Forest Resources, Powdermill Nature Reserve and Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Individuals interested in volunteering for Atlas survey work are asked to register on the [Breeding Bird Atlas Website](#) or call Atlas project coordinators at 724-593-6022.

American Forests Seeking Seeds from Historic Trees

[American Forests' Historic Tree Nursery](#) needs your help collecting seeds from historic trees. The Nursery grows seedlings from famous and historic trees around the country, including the Tulip Poplar from George Washington's Mount Vernon home and the last surviving Apple Tree planted by Johnny Appleseed.

Now it is asking volunteers to assist us in the seed-gathering process. Collecting seeds from historic trees is an enjoyable and unique way to connect with American history. By traveling to battlefields and areas made famous by presidents, artists, or civil rights leaders, you will meet interesting people and perhaps others like yourself who want to carry on the legacy of this country through historic trees.

As an incentive for seed collectors, the Nursery will award anyone who collects from one tree with a Wave Leatherman, a travel-sized toolkit that comes in its own handy case. Those who collect from two trees, will receive a Magellan GPS unit. And those enthusiasts who collect from three or more trees, will be sent a Nikon Rangefinder, a device that allows you to determine distances, trees' heights and more. All of these fine products are our way of saying thank you for your hard work.

At the same time, you will know that your efforts will make the air cleaner, conserve soil, and create new wildlife habitats. It's a wonderful opportunity for Scout troops, 4-H and FFA organizations, too.

Find out more about historic trees near you by contacting [Susan Corbett](#) from [American Forests](#).

Meetings to be Held on Improved Public Access to EPA Rulemaking

To expand public involvement in the regulatory process, EPA will hold a "Forum on Public Access to Federal Rulemaking Through the Internet" in August.

EPA is the managing partner for E-Rulemaking, an E-Government Initiative to foster greater participation in federal rulemaking by the public and regulated entities with a better, easier way to read and comment on rules electronically.

EPA will hold four public meetings seeking input on this cross-agency initiative established under the President's Management Agenda. The first component, "[Regulations.gov](#)," was launched in January 2003, consolidating government rules open for public comment (from over 160 agencies) into a single, user friendly website.

When a rulemaking is announced in the Federal Register, a docket is also created to hold related documents, such as reports and public comments.

The second component now being developed is E-Dockets, a government-wide centralized docket management system. E-Dockets will allow the public to access and search all publicly available regulatory material.

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During these meetings, EPA will ask for feedback on the usability, features, and capabilities of the existing Regulations.gov and the planned E-Dockets. The public meeting closest to Pennsylvania is on Aug. 12, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at the Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.

For further information on the meetings, contact Kristin Tensuan at tensuan.kristin@epa.gov.

EPA Adds Corporate Level Recognition to Performance Track

For the first time, EPA is recognizing corporations for environmental leadership under the National Environmental Performance Track program.

EPA is seeking initial nominations by August 13

The new designation will recognize companies that have shown their commitment to Performance Track through multiple facility memberships and have demonstrated environmental excellence such as reducing water, energy and solid waste use.

The benefits of joining may include linking the [Performance Track website](#) to each company's environmental website and recognition of their environmental efforts. To qualify, at least five of the company's facilities must be Performance Track members, and 25 percent of the company's operations must be Performance Track members and/or members of similar performance-based state programs.

Selected companies designated as Performance Track Corporate Leaders will commit to improve their environmental performance and that of their suppliers and/or customers, and increase their level of membership in the current program to at least 50 percent of their U.S. operations within five years of designation.

From this list of companies, EPA intends to ask up to three that appear to be the strongest candidates to apply, with applications due by October 29. EPA will then designate the initial Performance Track Corporate Leaders and notify them of their selection in the fall.

EPA Helps Rural Communities Reduce Asthma Emergency Room Visits

A hundred asthmatic children under the age of 18 in Greene County, Pennsylvania and Monongalia County, West Virginia completed a two-year National Nursing Centers Consortium's (NNCC) [Asthma Safe Kids \(ASK\) program](#).

This EPA-funded program is an in-home education program to improve recognition of asthma triggers in the home and to decrease exposures to these triggers.

Results determined that the curriculum was successful in increasing knowledge of asthma triggers. Above all, emergency room visits showed a six percent change over a 12-month period decreasing in frequency from 17 percent to 11 percent.

EPA, DEP Partner on Workshops to Advise on Brownfields Funding

In an effort to provide communities with information on how to apply for state and federal funding for Brownfields redevelopment, the EPA Region 3 brownfields team and DEP plan to conduct a series of workshops across the region by the end of the fiscal year.

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Partnering with state brownfields programs, the workshops are designed to provide local communities with useful tips on applying for funding. State workshops scheduled to date include: August 17 – Harrisburg and August 24 – Pittsburgh.

See the [EPA Region 3 webpage](#) for more information.

NewsClips: [EPA, DEP to Hold Joint Brownfield Grant Workshop](#)
[EPA, DEP Lauded for One-Stop Cleanup Agreement](#)

Op-Ed: Gov. Rendell Talks About Energy Issues at Democratic Convention

As a special feature, here's the text of Gov. Rendell's speech before the Democratic National Convention highlighting energy issues.

“My fellow Americans, my Democrats, my fellow Pennsylvanians – thank you for that warm welcome.

“The greatness of the American people is that we are at our best in times of crisis. In 1945, America faced a Europe with a shattered infrastructure, a decimated economy, and threatened by an encroaching Soviet Union. To meet that challenge, we launched the Marshall Plan, formed NATO, and changed the course of history.

“Today, the crisis is on our shores. The challenge before us is here at home.

“The price of gas at the pump is at record levels. The cost of energy to run our factories is wreaking havoc on our industrial competitiveness. And families are finding it harder and harder to afford to heat their homes.

“Instead of responding with big ideas that put Americans to work, we are exporting jobs, exporting dollars, and we are exporting opportunity -- the opportunity to strengthen our economy by becoming the world's leader in new environmental technologies: the clean cars, efficient appliances, and alternative fuels that are the wave of the future.

“And more than that: because we lack a sound energy policy, we are forced to deal with tyrants who fund terrorists in order to keep the lights on in our homes and fuel in our cars.

“Our foreign policy is skewed. Our values are compromised. And we are paying a price. John Kerry said it best, “No young American soldier should fight and die because of our dependence on foreign oil.”

“My friends, we are losing jobs. Our economy is hurting. And middle-class families are feeling the squeeze all because America is dependent on foreign oil...oil that flows at the whim of world events...and too often from the wells of dictators.

“John Kerry knows that to build a stronger America, we must do better. We can no longer rely on foreign oil fields to power our economy. We can no longer compromise the interests of our security just to make sure that the pipelines from faraway kingdoms flow freely.

“That is why, tonight – here in the birthplace of the American revolution – we must declare our independence – our energy independence. We must elect a President to lead us toward a safer, stronger America free from the tyranny of foreign oil. We must elect John Kerry.

“John Kerry has a plan to move America away from its dependence on Mideast oil.

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“First, to bring down our fuel costs, he will do what it takes to deliver clean natural gas to our factory doors in abundant supply – and at a reasonable price.

“And John Kerry will roll up his sleeves to work with coal companies to scrub their plants and create new technologies to generate clean coal energy to heat our homes.

“In Pennsylvania, we are already using waste coal to generate electricity and coal mine gas is being converted into energy. And when John Kerry is President, we will become a world leader in the clean coal economy.

“Second, John Kerry knows that moving toward energy independence means creating more jobs.

“There are thousands of people who are choosing to drive new hybrid cars that get great gas mileage. Yet, the waiting lists stretch for six months – with spots on those list being auctioned on e-bay for \$500 or more. Yet where are these cars being made? In Korea and Japan.

“To make sure those jobs are created here, John Kerry will invest \$10 billion in tax incentives for American car manufacturers to convert factories to build these cars of the future right here in the United States and tax credits for consumers to purchase those vehicles.

“Third, John Kerry will put America ahead of the rest of the world by boosting demand for alternative sources of energy to 20 percent -- and to meet that demand and to put more Americans to work, he intends to make America the world’s largest producer of alternative fuels.

“Now, I don’t have a PhD in energy policy. But I do know this: if I use less energy in my house, my electric bill goes down. It’s commonsense – commonsense for me, commonsense for America.

“That’s why John Kerry will cut the federal energy bill by \$14 billion -- freeing up resources for us to invest in education and the economy. And he will help every American family and business to do the same, driving down their energy bills too.

“Two hundred and twenty eight years ago – in my hometown of Philadelphia – a native son of Boston – John Hancock – signed his name to the Declaration of Independence knowing full well the risk of taking this action.

“There is only one candidate for president who will courageously offer his signature to American’s new declaration of energy independence because he knows full well the risk of not doing so – that person is the next President of the United States of America, John Kerry.

“Thank you, and good night.”

NewsClip: [Energy Efficiency No Longer “Rodney Dangerfield” of Energy](#)

Taking Positive Action



[Learn How to Compost In Your Own Backyard](#)



Sun & Earth Making Mark in Environment-Friendly Products

Watershed NewsClips

[Buffer to Be Restored Along Montour County Creek](#)
[Results from Wells Creek Growing Greener Projects](#)
[PA & MD Trying to Fend Off Invasive Fish Species](#)
[University Authority Moving Ahead With Water Reuse Project](#)
[PACD Announces Pollution Prevention, Watershed Grants](#)
[Grant Awarded to Help Improve White Clay Creek in Avondale](#)
[Plan to Protect Creek Debuts](#)
[Judge Upholds Decision to Bar Logging](#)
[Federal Funds Making Way for Watershed Work](#)
[PFBC Conducts Fish Survey at Two Lick Creek](#)
[Watershed's Next Phase Discussed in Ridgebury](#)
[Two Months of Rain in Two Weeks](#)
[Fishing: Flathead Catfish are Monongahela Monsters](#)
[Scouts, Environmentalist Aid in Cleaning River](#)
[Work in Two Northeast Watersheds Receiving Federal Funds](#)
[Wildlands Conservancy unveils site for Lehigh River](#)
[Big crowd debates watershed buffers](#)
[Environmental Projects Aim To Keep Lake W'l'p'pk Clean](#)
[Conservation districts receive \\$170K in state watershed protection grants](#)

Regulations

The **Independent Regulatory Review Commission** met on July 29 and approved a final Environmental Quality Board regulation to exclude extraction of coal incidental to government-financed highway construction or reclamation projects from the coal mining requirements of Chapters 86, 87 and 88. See the [June 15 EQB agenda packet](#) for a copy of the rule.

August 17 - Environmental Quality Board meeting agenda will include: Final - Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards; Proposed - Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Final - Small NOx, Stationary Internal Combustion Engines and Cement Kilns. Agenda and meeting packet items will be posted on the [EQB meeting page](#) shortly.

[Pennsylvania Bulletin – July 31, 2004](#)

[Comment Deadlines Open](#)

[Copies of Proposed Regulations](#)

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

Technical Guidance & Permits

DEP published a notice in the [July 31 Pennsylvania Bulletin](#) of a general permit to address the transfer, storage, composting and processing of spent mushroom substrate (SMS). [Full Story](#)

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

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- **August 9-11** – Indiana County Conservation District Environmental Education [teacher workshop on acid mine drainage](#).
- **August 10** – DEP [Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee](#) meeting
- **August 12** – House Transportation Committee informational meeting on I-99 a construction and acid rock problem. Harrisburg. **NewsClip:** [DEP Announces Response to I-99 Remediation Plan](#)
- **August 12** – [Recycling Fund Advisory Committee](#) meeting
- **August 20-** [Joint Conservation Committee](#) hearing on aquaculture. Mount Pocono.
- **August 25** – Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee hearing on timber theft. Franklin.
- **August 26** – [Joint Conservation Committee](#) meeting of Forestry Task Force. State College.
- **Sept. 14** – [Steam Optimization Workshop](#), Lehigh County.
- **Nov. 17-18** – Manufactured Soils Conference, State College. Watch the [PROP Conference webpage](#) for more information.

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

Helpful Web Links

[Daily NewsClips](#) [Weekly DEP Update](#) [GreenTreks Network](#) [Watershed Weekly](#)

[DEP Press Releases](#) [DEP Advisory Committee Meetings & Agendas](#)

Contributions Invited

Send your stories about environmental issues, programs and positive actions to **PA Environment Digest** - DHess@HolstonCrisci.com .

PA Environment Digest is edited by David E. Hess, former Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, and is published as a service to the clients of Holston & Crisci and the public. Holston & Crisci is a Harrisburg-based government affairs firm whose clients include Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations. For more information on Holston & Crisci call 717-234-1716.

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