

PACD Legislative Committee
Ramada Inn, State College, PA
January 19, 2011

Welcome and Roll Call

Chairman Ron Rohall called the meeting to order at 6:15 PM. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Committee Members in Attendance: Donna Fisher, Blair; Ronald Rohall, Westmoreland; Harold Kulp, Chester; Josh Longmore, Luzerne; Jim Luce, Wyoming, Jim Shaner, Beaver, Chris Strohmaier, Chester, Joseph Fecondo, Delaware, Don Koontz, Mercer; Maryruth Wagner, Columbia.

Others in Attendance: Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Lillian Theophanis, Susquehanna; Bob Ritchey, Cambria; Seleen Shives, Fulton; Wayne Sweitzer, York; Sandy Thompson, McKean; Chris Strohmaier, Chester; Greg Phillips, Westmoreland; Charles Duritsa, Westmoreland; Leigh Beamesderfer, Lebanon; Drew Gilchrist, Montgomery; Glenn Seidel, Berks.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting (July 19, 2010)

The minutes of the previous meeting were provided to committee members for review.

It was moved by Don Koontz and seconded by Harold Kulp to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2010 meeting. Motion carried.

Dedicated Funding

Brenda Shambaugh reported that a severance tax did not pass the PA General Assembly last fall. With a new administration pledging no new taxes, PACD has embarked on a new funding strategy, asking all Senators to discuss conservation district funding during their interviews with the DEP Secretary and PDA Secretary nominees. All districts were encouraged to write to their Senators and House members supporting dedicated funding for the Conservation District Fund. The General Assembly may consider some type of dedicated funding for local governments who have Marcellus shale in their county. PACD will continue to work with other associations and members of the General Assembly to promote dedicated funding for conservation districts.

Conservation District Annual Report

Brenda Shambaugh reported that PACD will produce an annual report highlighting projects from every conservation district. The report should be completed within the next few months and will be distributed to every PA House and Senate member. The committee recommends that PACD generate a 2010 annual legislative report with the same format as last year with the possibility of adding the amount of funding coming into the county through conservation district grants. The committee encourages all conservation districts to participate in the report.

The committee discussed the possibility of conservation districts sending a monthly report to their elected leaders.

State Legislative Update

Brenda Shambaugh reported that a PACD transition fact sheet was distributed via e-mail to all PACD members. The report was also sent to numerous members of the Governor's transition team. PACD did meet with transition team members and reviewed PACD legislative priorities.

The Senate will soon begin the cabinet confirmation process. Senator Mike Folmer recently met with the Lebanon County Conservation District and stated his intent to ask the PDA and DEP cabinet nominee about adequate funding for the conservation district fund. His suggestion was that all conservation districts ask their Senators to pose similar questions to the secretarial nominees. The committee encourages all conservation districts to make that request.

The PACD legislative budget request was distributed and discussed. It was noted that the document includes two requests. The first is the actual funding need, and the second is a realistic budgetary approach considering the economic realities the Commonwealth is facing.

Capitol Day Event

The PACD Capitol Day event will take place on May 3, 2011. The format will be similar to last year. PACD will provide fact sheets and briefings for conservation district representatives, who will make their own appointments with elected leaders. All were encouraged to attend.

Federal Legislative Update

NACD is hiring a new CEO and will have their national convention next week. Renew Growing Greener is continuing to lobby for funding for the Environmental Stewardship Fund. Some conservation districts have received grant funding for projects from energy companies drilling in the Marcellus shale areas of the state.

Adjournment

It was moved by Harold Kulp and seconded by Donald Koontz to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.