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Conservation Districts Meet with House Agriculture Committee

(Harrisburg, PA) – On November 20, 2019, representatives from the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) met with the PA House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. The majority committee chair is Rep. Martin Causer (R-Cameron/McKean/Potter) and the minority committee chair is Rep. Eddie Day Pashinski (D-Luzerne). The informational meeting discussed the operations and activities of the county conservation districts.

Presenters included PACD Executive Director Brenda Shambaugh who explained why conservation districts were created. She also spoke about the programs that the conservation districts run in their local areas. Three programs were highlighted during the meeting: agriculture, the Dirt, Gravel/Low Volume Road Program, and stormwater.

Lancaster County Conservation District Manager Christopher Thompson spoke about the interaction between conservation districts and the agricultural community. Thompson spoke about challenges facing his county in meeting pollution production goals. Also, he addressed the need to keep conservation local and to build relationships with landowners.

Next, McKean County Conservation District Manager Sandy Thompson gave an overview of the Dirt, Gravel/Low Volume Road Program in PA. She shared before and after photos of completed projects. When asked what the biggest obstacle is for the program, Thompson stated, “prevailing wage at \$25,000 for these projects is the largest obstacle. Increasing the threshold to \$100,000 would help this program complete more projects.”

(more)



Lastly, Blair County Conservation District Manager Donna Fisher spoke about stormwater concerns. She explained how districts became involved in the issue. She also said conservation districts are good at completing demonstration projects for educational purposes and encouraged legislators to take advantage of tours conservation districts offer.

In concluding the meeting, Representative Causer said, “Conservation districts are unique, county-based, and rely on state funding. The districts are masters of piecing programs together to work through all of these issues.”

The conservation district representatives thanked the Committee for their time and encouraged members to treat the conservation districts as a resource. As Chris Thompson said, “We work best when we work together.”

For more information about the work of the state’s 66 conservation districts, visit www.pacd.org. You can also follow PACD on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/15aWrKi>.

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The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) is a non-profit organization whose guiding values include: Sustainable Resource Conservation; Integrity, Local; Education and Outreach; and Partnerships. PACD primarily serves as the collective voice for Pennsylvania’s 66 county conservation districts. For more information about PACD, visit www.pacd.org.

