

**PACD Legislative Committee Minutes
Zoom Meeting
January 11, 2021**

Welcome and Roll Call

Chairwoman Donna Fisher called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. with a quorum present.

Committee Members in Attendance: Doug Beri, Indiana; Donna Fisher, Blair; Kelly Stagen, Pike; Chris Strohmaier, Chester; Chuck Gould, Monroe; Mark Hamilton, Tioga; Michele Long, Pike; Jon Burgess, Allegheny; Jo Ann McCready, Lawrence.

Guests in Attendance: Dennis Beck, Cambria; Joan McCarty, Columbia; Judy Becker, Northumberland; John Dryzal, Cambria; Adam McClain, Adams; Linda Mackey, DEP; Denise Coleman, NRCS; Carrie Richmond, Sullivan; Shirley Snyder, Northumberland; Rob Cronauer, Westmoreland; Brenda Shambaugh, PACD; Shannon Wehinger, PACD; Molly Burns, PACD.

Minutes of the January 22, 2020 Minutes

The minutes of the July 9, 2020 meeting were provided for review.

It was moved by Chuck Duritsa and seconded by Kelly Stagen to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion carried.

General Legislative Update

Brenda Shambaugh provided a general update on the state of the House and Senate post-election. She also noted that almost half of the districts received Growing Greener Grant funding.

PA State Budget

The PA General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, a final budget that will expire on June 30, 2021. Because the General Assembly does not know what the state revenue will be or how much the state economy will recover from COVID-19, most lines were level funded, including the Conservation District Lines in both the PDA and DEP budgets. Since the state must have a balanced budget and expenditures will far outweigh the revenue, it is anticipated that severe budget cuts could be made when the General Assembly completes the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget.

HB 509/SB 252

HB 509, the third-party reviewer legislation, passed the House but not the Senate. The Senate version of the bill, SB 252 never made it to the Senate floor. The prime sponsors of HB 509 and SB 252 have sent co-sponsorship memos to their colleagues so the bills will be reintroduced with a new number this legislative session. It was suggested that we stress upcoming ePermitting updates in the hope it will offset some of their concerns. PACD's suggested language did not make it into the bill.



SB 891

Senator Yaw sent out a co-sponsorship memo for this legislation that creates a statewide Expedited Review Legislation since the legislation did not pass the General Assembly, which means it will be introduced again this legislative session. PACD has been working with Senator Yaw's staff to amend the legislation allowing conservation districts to utilize their existing expedited review program if they have one.

SB 1272

Senator Yaw also sent out a co-sponsorship memo for this legislation that creates a grant program fashioned after the Dirt and Gravel Road program with the goal of providing funding to landowners who want to develop and implement BMP's on their land.

SB 619

This legislation, also sponsored by Senator Yaw, changes the definition of pollution, creating a threshold below which spills, etc. would not be reportable. Currently all spills must be reported. The bill passed the Senate and the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee but was not considered by the full House. This legislation will be re-introduced this session.

HB 1822

During the severe COVID-19 restrictions, a piece of legislation passed the House that would have frozen any new contract funding from special funds, including the Conservation District Fund. At that time, PACD asked the House and the Senate to consider an amendment that would delete the Conservation District Fund entirely from the legislation, specifically stating that conservation districts are a key government entity in the reopening process. PACD opposed HB 1822 unless it was amended to delete the Conservation District Fund from the legislation. This legislation was stopped in the Senate and since the egregious language was added to the bill as an amendment, there is not way of tracking whether the current language in HB 1822 will be re-introduced. However, the prime sponsor of the amendment has not sent out a co-sponsorship memo specific to the amendment.

Conservation District Highlights Pages

PACD will be sending out all the district highlights pages this week. This year, instead of copying every district on the emails to legislators, we will be sending one email to districts announcing that the pages are being sent out, and one after all the highlights pages have been sent.

Conservation District Week

PACD will sponsor Conservation District Week this year and will again ask districts to contact their legislators locally and hold events in their county. Unless things change, there will be no capitol visits to legislators in Harrisburg. It was suggested that this committee hold a Zoom meeting with key legislators to touch on items and topics of particular concern.

Adjourn

It was moved by Kelly and seconded by Dennis to adjourn the meeting at 11:00 a.m. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.