

**PACD Legislative Committee
Videoconference Minutes
January 15, 2026**

Welcome and Roll Call

Chair Kelly Stagen called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. without a quorum. Kelly thanked outgoing committee chair Donna Fisher for her excellent leadership and service to the committee.

Committee members in attendance: Christian Strohmaier, Chester; Adam McClain, Adams; Douglas Beri, Indiana; Kelly Stagen, Pike; Mary Burris, Lawrence; Christopher Thompson, Lancaster

PACD staff and guests in attendance: John Dryzal, Cambria; Jeff Werner, NRCS; Alicia Ramsey, Clarion; Molly Burns, PACD; Amy Brown, PACD; Shannon Wehinger, PACD; Derek Snyder, Versant Strategies; Emil Bove, Westmoreland/PACD; Molly Bengs, PACD; Dean Druckenmiller, Berks

Minutes of the Previous Meeting on June 30, 2025

The committee will approve the minutes at the next meeting where a quorum is present.

Bill Tracking/Legislative Update

Derek Snyder, Chief Operating Officer for Versant Strategies, explained how Versant tracks legislation for the districts and offered to answer questions about specific legislation. He noted that we are in the third quarter of the two-year session, which means any bills introduced in 2025 are still active in 2026. A link to the list of agricultural, environmental, and conservation legislation Versant is currently tracking was provided for reference.

It was noted that Congress is proposing to redirect \$500 Million of AML funding nationwide from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), \$169 Million of which is slated for Pennsylvania. The money would be redirected to wildfire management and National Forest Service operations. This may go to the Senate to be passed later this week. PACD will forward information to the membership.

Conservation District Highlights Project Update

PACD Executive Director Amy Brown reported 65 of 66 highlights pages have been submitted. PACD will provide Versant with all 66 to share with legislators statewide. PACD is asking districts to follow up on the local level by meeting with their legislators locally. This is the time to thank them for their support and share success stories.



Plans to Enhance Conservation District Week

President/CEO of Versant Strategies MeeCee Baker reported that conservation districts should continue to invite legislators to local events and have one-on-one meetings at local offices for Conservation District Week.

Current Legislative Strategy

MeeCee Baker explained PACD's legislative strategy for the budget process. She also recommended that PACD focus on the appropriations ask and one other legislative item. This will use our political capital to the best advantage. Molly Burns explained that our other legislative item this round is to request an increase in the Growing Greener administrative threshold from 5% to 10%.

Looking Ahead: Strategic Planning and Policy Development

Molly Burns reported that the draft PACD Strategic Plan will be approved by the PACD Executive Board during their meeting on January 27. The plan includes an update to the PACD bylaws. Staff would also like to conduct a mini strategic planning exercise with each committee, to reinvigorate the committees and determine how we can improve each committee moving forward.

Chair Kelly Stagen charged committee members to consider what kinds of conservation policies we would like to pursue as a committee. What would make things better?

Adjournment

The committee was adjourned without a quorum at 11:03 AM.