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Conservationists Testify on Invasive Species in the Commonwealth

(Harrisburg, PA) – Today, the Center for Rural Pennsylvania held a virtual public hearing on the negative impact of invasive species in Pennsylvania. Invasive species such as the spotted lanternfly, emerald ash borer, Japanese knotweed, and hydrilla have a negative effect on Pennsylvania’s natural resources. Pennsylvania’s conservation districts provided testimony at the hearing. Conservation district representatives outlined the importance of developing and funding a statewide invasive species program.

Two conservation district staff testified during the session. Brian Pilarcik is the Watershed Specialist for the Crawford County Conservation District. Pilarcik spoke about the aquatic invasive species, hydrilla, in the Pymatuning Reservoir.

This invasive plant was first noticed in 2010, and the conservation district developed a coalition to address the problem. However, had there been a statewide invasive species program and funding already in place, the situation could have been handled much more quickly, saving a significant amount of money and staff time. Pilarcik’s testimony is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/BPilarcik>.

The second conservation district speaker was Jody Groshek, the Communications and Outreach Director at McKean County Conservation District. She spoke about the importance of developing a coordinated statewide effort to address the threat of invasive species to Pennsylvania’s economy.

Groshek said, “Formally organized and fully funded invasive species partnerships will

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play a key role in many facets of preventing and managing problems statewide. Their power lies in the ability to act rapidly to threats; utilize local entities and trusted partners, many of which already work with conservation districts; and relying on dedicated personnel acting locally to understand and recognize county and regional needs.”

Groshek’s full testimony is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/Groshek>.

Pennsylvania’s conservation districts support cooperative invasive species work, which will benefit all Pennsylvanians.

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 <https://www.facebook.com/PAConservation> or Instagram and Twitter @PAConservation.

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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.

