

June 12, 2019

The Honorable Thomas Wolf
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Mike Turzai
Speaker of the House
139 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

The Honorable Bryan Cutler
Majority Leader
110 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2100

The Honorable Frank Dermody
Minority Leader
423 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2033

The Honorable Joseph B. Scarnati III
President Pro Tempore
292 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

The Honorable Jake Corman
Majority Leader
350 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3034

The Honorable Jay Costa
Minority Leader
535 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3043

Dear Governor Wolf and Legislative Leaders:

I am contacting you on behalf of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Citizens Advisory Council (CNRAC). As you are aware, CNRAC is charged with providing advice to DCNR regarding the conservation and stewardship of the Commonwealth's natural resources.

We are once again contacting our elected representatives to express our great concern over the use of various special funds to bring the 2019-20 General Fund budget into balance – specifically, the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and the Environmental Stewardship Fund, two very important funding sources for DCNR. Both the Environmental Stewardship Fund and the Keystone Fund will lose tens of millions of dollars in the Governor's proposed 2019-2020 budget. These funds are critical to land conservation, management, and infrastructure maintenance projects in the Commonwealth's parks and forests, as well as community recreation and conservation projects.

Not only does DCNR rely on funding from these sources to address needs within the Commonwealth's parks and forests, the expectation of the public is that these funds will be used for the purposes set forth in the legislative language initiating the creation of the funds. The Keystone Fund was created by Act 50 of 1993 from a dedicated portion of the Realty Transfer Tax specifically to support conservation, parks, and recreation. The Environmental Stewardship Fund was given a dedicated funding source in 2002 through an increase in the tipping fee—a fee charged for dumping trash in landfills to be allocated to four state agencies for environmental restoration, land conservation and community recreation and revitalization projects.

The loss of the Keystone Fund, DCNR's primary source of funding for conservation and recreation grants, would greatly harm DCNR's ability to achieve its mission. Because Keystone funds must be matched by local sources, transferring these funds will disrupt many significant, high-value, multi-year conservation and recreation projects that often have substantial local participation and investment. Keystone funds empower local people and the private sector to support local recreation and conservation initiatives, that, in-turn, benefit the local economy. According to Keystonefund.org, every dollar in state grants typically leverages at least \$1 in other investments and usually the multiplier is much larger. The Keystone Fund alone has leveraged more than \$1 billion in public/private partnerships to complete more than 4,500 projects.

The loss of the Environmental Stewardship Fund, commonly known as Growing Greener, would also be extraordinarily damaging to DCNR and its ability to fulfill its mission. These funds have been used to conserve over 200,000 acres of open space, restore clean water and reduce flooding in many rivers and streams, revitalize communities, and have helped the department address a backlog of infrastructure and deferred maintenance projects in our state parks and forests.

We recognize the need to fund Department operations. However, raiding special funds to support agency operations is not the answer. We are asking that these dedicated conservation funding sources remain intact. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss our great concern with using the monies in these valuable funds for purposes that were not intended. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Gary Kribbs
CNRAC Chairman

cc: Cindy Adams Dunn, DCNR Secretary
Gretchen Leslie, DCNR Senior Advisor
Eric Nelson, DCNR Director of Legislative Affairs
The Honorable Gene Yaw
The Honorable John Yudichak
The Honorable Daryl Metcalfe
The Honorable Greg Vitali