

PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**JOINT LEGISLATIVE AIR AND WATER POLLUTION
CONTROL AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

ANNUAL REPORT

2006

March, 2007

TO: All Members of the General Assembly

FROM: Representative Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman
Senator Raphael J. Musto, Vice Chairman

SUBJECT: 2006 Annual Report

DATE: March, 2007

*“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other”
- John F. Kennedy, 35th American President*

The Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee (Committee) has been working since 1967 to improve the scientific basis of environmental decision-making. Legislators in the Pennsylvania General Assembly are the policy makers for Pennsylvania’s environmental law. Their decisions significantly impact the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians. This responsibility at the state level has taken on greater significance in view of the environmental management changes that are taking place in the United States: Today, the states are the leaders.

In this regard, better information and data are crucial. That is the mission of the Committee. Through public hearings and research the Committee brings the main questions of environmental science into focus. The Committee attempts to introduce sound scientific justifications for action to address certain environmental problems and critically examine the science surrounding others. Comprehensive and reliable information on the state’s environmental and natural resources is a cornerstone of effective environmental management and an integral part of a state strategy to anticipate and address problems. With over 39 years of work behind it, the Committee has earned a reputation as a credible facilitator for environmental information that is accurate, balanced and objective.

The Committee members and staff are pleased to present to you its 2006 Annual Report. The report details key activities and achievements of the Committee in its efforts to serve the General Assembly during the past year. The range and depth of our activities are reflected in the pages that follow, both in summaries of what we have published in recent months and in the highlights of our ongoing activities. As in the past, we shall try to fulfill our mission and that of our members by looking ahead, seeking to anticipate the future environmental agenda.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2005-2006 Session

Rep. Bob Bastian
Rep. Camille George
Rep. Richard Grucela
Rep. Julie Harhart
Rep. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman
Rep. Scott A. Petri
Rep. Thomas C. Petrone
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Senator Mary Jo White
Senator Robert C. Wonderling
Senator John Wozniak

COMMITTEE STAFF

Craig D. Brooks, Executive Director
Tony M. Guerrieri, Research Analyst
Geoff MacLaughlin, Communications Specialist
Lynn L. Mash, Administrative Officer

THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE AIR AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

In 1967, legislation (Act 448, P.L. 1022) was enacted creating the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee. The Committee consists of 18 members of the General Assembly. Nine members are appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, five from the majority party and four from the minority party. The Speaker of the House of Representatives also appoints nine members, five from the majority party and four from the minority party.

The Committee's powers and duties according to Act 448 include:

- **Conducting continuing studies of air and water pollution laws and recommending needed changes to the General Assembly.**
- **Conducting continuing studies of the enforcement of air and water pollution laws, and in conjunction with such studies making necessary trips to various sections of the Commonwealth to hold public hearings.**
- **Conducting continuing studies of mining practices, mining laws, and reclamation of mined lands.**
- **Holding public hearings and receiving comments regarding any or all of the above subjects of study.**

Since its creation, the Committee has been instrumental in the development of Pennsylvania's environmental laws and policies. The Committee staff is available at all times to assist members of the General Assembly with environmental and conservation issues. The Committee's files and library are extensive. Also, the staff has access to information from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), other state and federal agencies, private industry, and trade associations.

LAND USE PLANNING

Regional Approach to Growth Management

Political fragmentation may be the single largest obstacle to land use planning in Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth's 2,568 municipalities (56 cities, 964 boroughs and 1,548 townships) have sole authority over land use decisions and must provide for every type of development. However, not one of these municipalities is required by state law to communicate or coordinate with any other on individual land use decisions. This means that each municipality has been making its own choices about where to put quarries, shopping malls and high-end housing.

This piecemeal decision-making has resulted in an every-municipality-for-itself mentality that often ends with unforeseen and expensive consequences. For example, on September 19, 2006 about 500,000 cubic yards of rock, dirt and debris slid off of a shopping plaza construction site in Kilbuck Township (one of Allegheny County's 130 cities, boroughs and townships). The construction site, comprised of a hilltop with a steeply sloping hillside, was being excavated to create a plateau for the shopping complex and parking lot. The rocks and debris spilled onto Route 65, covering all four lanes of the major commuter route for almost two weeks and blocking the main line of the Norfolk Southern railroad along the Ohio River for three days.

Sensors at the site indicate that parts of the land continue to shift toward the highway. Three of the four lanes of Route 65 have reopened. One lane remains closed to traffic to provide a safety buffer in case the fill material should again begin to move rapidly.

On Thursday, November 2, 2006 the Committee held a public hearing in Sewickley, Pennsylvania to review the actions and conditions leading to the Kilbuck Township landslide. Approximately 125 people attended the hearing and the Committee heard testimony from numerous individuals including representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Others who testified included representatives from Norfolk Southern Corp., neighboring Emsworth Borough, and Communities First!, a citizens group formed to oppose the shopping plaza.

The original plans for the \$28 million shopping complex contained dozens of slope grade variances of township building regulations that allowed for steeper slopes and created a bigger plateau for the shopping plaza.

The state agency representatives testified that their permitting role is extremely restricted on local land use decisions. PennDOT's only involvement with the devel-

oper was issuing a highway occupancy permit for an access road, including requirements for adding left-turn standby lanes and traffic signals. Otherwise, the agency had no responsibilities beyond its right-of-way. DEP defers to the township on sloping issues, but it approved permits and plans at various stages for soil and erosion control, blasting, pollutant discharge elimination and sewage control.

After reviewing the hearing testimony, the Committee offered three recommendations to the Joint State Government Commission (Commission), which was directed by House Resolution 897, Printer's Number 4824 to establish a task force to conduct, with the Committee's assistance, an in-depth investigation of the landslide. The recommendations offered were:

- 1. Examine the process of local government oversight in large construction projects. In particular, review geologic requirements for project approval such as grading, slopes, stabilization and proximity to highways and railroads. More specifically, look at the possibility of monitoring geologic review by DCNR for large projects. Also, examine the process for waiving local ordinances for such construction activities and decisions on projects of a specific size.**
- 2. Conduct a study to determine if local municipalities should continue to have sole authority to make land use decisions that affect neighboring municipalities. Consider the possibility of county oversight and approval of projects where appropriate in areas affecting multiple jurisdictions.**
- 3. Give due consideration to the economic development challenges that face the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, investigate the creation of a regional and/or state planning council(s) to help develop and guide land use planning and transportation policies for cities, towns and municipalities.**

There has been and continues to be extensive communication between the Committee and the Commission, seeking to gather as much knowledge and expertise as possible and maximize cooperation. The Commission must complete its investigation by October 24, 2007.

DEP has demanded that the developer find solutions to stop the slide from reoccurring and develop a site stabilization plan. The plan will be reviewed by DEP, DCNR and PennDOT.

Copies of the public hearing transcript and additional information concerning the Kilbuck Township landslide may be obtained from the Committee office.

WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

Legislative Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force

Over nine million Pennsylvania citizens are served by public sewage collection and treatment systems. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DEP have estimated that the upkeep and replacement costs of rapidly aging system infrastructure amount to more than \$8 billion. The systems already represent tens of billions of dollars of capital investment and must operate around-the-clock, all the while having to meet more stringent compliance standards. The systems often represent a community's largest environmental investment and play a key role in maintaining environmental health as well as being factors in a community's economic development and growth.

Following the Committee's recommendation to consider a concurrent resolution creating a wastewater infrastructure task force to further investigate infrastructure management issues, House Resolution 88, Printer's Number 560 was introduced in February, 2005.

With the passage of House Resolution 88 in November, 2005, the Committee formed a partnership with government, business, and industry to study wastewater infrastructure issues in Pennsylvania. The resolution created a wastewater task force consisting of four members of the General Assembly and a 22-member advisory committee to assist the task force and staff in studying infrastructure issues. The advisory committee includes representatives of DEP, EPA's Region III Office, operations management for publicly-owned sewer systems, consulting engineers specializing in sewage treatment system design and operation, and experienced practitioners of public accounting, finance or economics related to the design, construction, operation or maintenance of public sewer systems.

The Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force and Advisory Committee held its first meeting at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania on September 12, 2006. The meeting was held in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association's annual meeting and featured a large audience in addition to the task force and advisory committee members.

To date, the task force has examined the issues of the findings of EPA's 2000 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey as they apply to sewage treatment systems in the Commonwealth. Topics covered at the meeting included an update by DEP on the 2000 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey, and presentations on total maximum daily loads, statewide phosphorous limits, blending and the Actiflow system.

In 2007 the task force and advisory committee are scheduled to address the following issues:

- Making an assessment of the ability of treatment plants to meet the compliance goals established by the survey; and,
- Identifying how the use of new and innovative technologies can be used to help meet these goals.

Additional information concerning the Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force may be obtained by calling the Committee office at 717-787-7570.

FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Legislative Forestry Task Force

To many, Pennsylvania is synonymous with forests that blanket much of the landscape. Forest products have dominated Pennsylvania's economy for many years and remain important, especially to rural communities with a long history of reliance on timber for employment.

Forests cover approximately 16.6 million acres in Pennsylvania, over half of the total land area. Currently, State Forest Lands account for 2.1 million acres; State Game Lands, 1.5 million acres; the Allegheny National Forest, 500,000 acres, and the remaining forestland is in private, tribal, or local government ownership.

For the past few decades, heated debates over timber management practices across the state have polarized Pennsylvanians. Nonetheless, the controversy has brought about significant changes in the way forest lands are allocated and managed.

Because of the importance of the forest industry to the economy and its rural communities, the Legislative Forestry Task Force and Advisory Committee was established in 1994, pursuant to House Resolution 263. The task force is composed of four members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly; two members of the Senate and two members of the House of Representatives. The advisory committee is composed of 16 members from many disciplines including DCNR, education, forestry, the forest products industry, the Pennsylvania Game Commission and others.

Since its inception in 1994, the Forestry Task Force has continued its work through a series of legislative resolutions enacted in succeeding legislative sessions, with staff assistance from the Committee. The most recent resolution, Senate Resolution 137, Printer's Number 968, adopted on January 30, 2006, provided the task force

with a broad and challenging two-year mission. This resolution re-establishes the Legislative Forestry Task Force and Advisory Committee, and directs the Committee to research additional issues facing Pennsylvania's forests and forest products industry.

The task force met on the following dates:

January 12, 2006 – State College, Pennsylvania

May 4, 2006 – State College, Pennsylvania

October 19, 2006 – State College, Pennsylvania

The task force agenda included issues such as the growing threat of forest pests and diseases, prescribed burning as a forest regeneration management tool and the United States Forest Service's survey of the private forest land owner in Pennsylvania.

For more information concerning the Legislative Forestry Task Force, please contact the Committee office.

ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGIES

Mine Reclamation

Since its creation in 1967, the Committee has been involved with energy issues, specifically the Commonwealth's coal resources. One of the duties outlined in the Committee's enabling legislation was to conduct continuing studies of mining practices, mining laws, and reclamation of mined lands. The Committee continued its interest in the reclamation of mined lands with the issuance of its February, 2004 report, "A Proposed Moratorium on the Use of Fly Ash in Mine Reclamation Projects."

The residues left after coal is burned to generate power – coal combustion residue (CCR) – consist of noncombustible coal matter and material trapped by pollution control devices. Most of this material is disposed of in landfills, but it is increasingly being used in mine reclamation.

After reviewing DEP's reclamation program and testimony from a July, 2003 public hearing on the issue, the Committee's 2004 report, "A Proposed Moratorium on the Use of Fly Ash in Mine Reclamation Projects", concluded that "putting CCR in coal mines as part of the reclamation process is a viable management option as long as (1) CCR placement is properly planned and is carried out in a manner that avoids significant adverse environmental and health impacts, and (2) the regulatory process for issuing permits includes clear provisions for public involvement."

The issue is once again a topic of discussion with the March, 2006 release of a report, “Managing Coal Combustion Residue in Mines”, by the federal National Research Council’s (NRC) Committee on Mine Placement of Coal Combustion Wastes.

The Committee’s 2004 report and the NRC’s 2006 report contain a number of similarities. For example, both reports rejected a moratorium on the use of CCR for mine reclamation. Both reports noted that placing CCR as mine fill has beneficial effects including the neutralization of acid mine drainage, thereby lessening the potential for contaminants from mines entering the environment; assisting with reclamation and land restoration efforts; and reducing the need for new landfills. Both reports also concluded that improper use of CCR posed risks.

The NRC’s report adds a national perspective that in many cases bolsters the Committee’s statewide view of the issue. However, debate on these two reports is ongoing. Staff has been asked to present the findings of the Committee’s February, 2004 report before the Environmental Hearing Board in April, 2007.

The NRC’s 2006 report, “**Managing Coal Combustion Residues in Mines**”, can be found at <http://nap.edu/catalog/11592>. Copies of the Committee’s 2004 report, “**A Proposed Moratorium on the Use of Fly Ash in Mine Reclamation Projects**”, are available by calling the Committee office or on the Committee website at <http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us>.

Oil and Gas

The nearly 2.1 million acres of land managed by DCNR’s Bureau of Forestry is valuable because of the conservation and recreational opportunities the land provides. Additionally, these properties have historically provided abundant sources of petroleum-based energy, such as oil and natural gas.

On February 6, 2006 the Committee released its report “Oil and Gas Leasing Activities on Commonwealth-Owned Lands”, pursuant to House Resolution 394, Printer’s Number 2595 of 2003. The resolution was adopted in response to a policy proposed by DCNR in its draft final State Forest Resource Management Plan (SFRMP), unveiled in 2003, that would have terminated all future leasing of shallow natural gas reserves beneath Commonwealth-owned lands.

The report contains four recommendations regarding DCNR’s oil and gas leasing policy:

- 1. DCNR should retain the proposed ban on new oil and gas well sites and roads in bioserve areas, old growth areas and wild and natural areas, allow limited use along steep slopes and high recreation impact areas (including buffer zones appropriate to such areas), but continue to grant waivers in buffer areas where greater environmental benefits occur.**
- 2. DCNR should replace the proposed blanket ban policy with one that would accommodate natural gas exploration and production in all geological horizons beneath State Forest lands under controlled conditions established in the leases.**
- 3. DCNR should adopt a lease structure that provides economic viability for gas production while ensuring protection for the state's forest reserves. Leases should reflect DEP's rules and regulations as closely as possible and ensure confidentiality of proprietary information contained in the leases.**
- 4. DCNR should adopt a modified bonus and fee structure reflecting nationwide industry norms, in order to facilitate broad-based participation in the lease bidding process.**

It is the Committee's belief that the recommendations will allow DCNR to continue its practice of multiple resource management on State Forest lands. The recommendations will allow for mineral operations on DCNR-owned land that are in accordance with sound conservation practices and which are fully compatible with other uses and values including timber, wildlife, forests, recreation and water resource management.

Further, the recommendations also allow for an ecologically safe opportunity to capitalize on the clean energy provided by natural gas, and maintain the revenue provided by the Oil and Gas Fund which has helped to finance the creation of eight new State Parks, supplement and expand 31 others, and purchase forest land. According to the report, that revenue amounts to between \$3 million and \$4 million annually.

The report also notes that DCNR and a Gas Industry Work Group have been meeting for the past two years to work on possible changes to DCNR's standard oil and gas lease agreement to reduce operational and access problems on State Forest lands, and have agreed upon several recommended changes, which are supported by the Committee.

The proposals include a new dispute resolution section, continuation of the existing royalty rate of 12.5 percent and resetting of the rental rate to \$5 per acre per year with periodic reviews for appropriateness, establishment of certain drilling conditions and conditions for granting waivers. There is new language to protect the confidentiality of operators' data while allowing free access as necessary to data by DCNR's technical staff. The proposed changes do not recommend a ceiling on the number of wells that would be allowed on State Forest land at any one time.

The Committee report also contains a history of oil and gas leasing in the Commonwealth, benefits to the Commonwealth from leasing and information on the SFRMP and its development.

Copies of the report, “**Oil and Gas Leasing Activities on Commonwealth-Owned Lands**”, are available by calling the Committee office or on the Committee website at <http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us>.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

Heritage Parks

The Committee has been an active participant in successful discussions concerning the future of northwestern Pennsylvania’s Oil Heritage Region becoming a nationally-designated heritage region. This has been a part of the Committee’s past work and support of the state’s heritage parks program.

On February 8, 2006 the Committee traveled to Washington DC to meet with members of Congress and their staff to generate support for the national “Petroleum Sesquicentennial Commemoration Act”, an act to establish a commission to assist in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the discovery of oil at Drake Well near Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859 and the resulting development of the American petroleum industry.

The keynote speaker at the meeting was U.S. Congressman John Peterson, of Pennsylvania’s 5th District (Venango County), where the Drake Well is located. Congressman Peterson, who is spearheading the federal legislation, also led the fight to gain national heritage area status for N.W. Pennsylvania’s Oil Heritage Region.

The Committee has also been an active participant in discussions concerning the future and sustainability of the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, one of the members of the Pennsylvania Heritage Parks system and one of Pennsylvania’s five nationally designated heritage areas.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Pennsylvania has always been a popular tourism destination. The Commonwealth has a prime competitive advantage because of its historical, natural and cultural attractions. Yet many of the components of this image, including historical sites, transportation, interpretation and signposting, wildlife management, litter collection

and roadside maintenance lack the constant attention they need to maintain high standards.

On September 20 and 21, 2006, the Committee co-sponsored the second annual Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Roadside Aesthetics Summit and Workshop in Harrisburg. The focus of the summit was furtherance of the effort to improve Pennsylvania's roadside aesthetics through anti-littering efforts, cleanups and highway beautification.

Featured speakers included Keep America Beautiful's Director of Education, Susan Smith, and representatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, DEP, DCNR and PennDOT.

Committee Executive Director Craig Brooks gave a presentation on the findings of the Committee's roadside aesthetics questions that were part of the 2006 Mansfield University Statewide Survey.

MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY STATEWIDE SURVEY

Since 1997, the Committee has commissioned a series of questions included in the annual Mansfield University Statewide Survey (formerly known as the Public Mind Survey of Mansfield University) to inform state, local and federal policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about a variety of environmental issues facing the state. The Mansfield University Statewide Survey provides the legislature, policymakers, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and general public policy preferences of Pennsylvania residents.

The 2006 survey focused on roadside aesthetics. Trash and litter along roadways catch Pennsylvanians' eyes, and they are bothered by it. Highway landscaping across the state also draws attention and it could be better. These are among the results of the Mansfield University Statewide Survey.

The Committee has joined with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful in seeking to improve roadside aesthetics in Pennsylvania and cosponsored a 2005 Roadside Aesthetics summit meeting. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is a statewide alliance working to promote and protect Pennsylvania's natural and community environments by cleaning up and preventing litter and illegal dumps, enhancing and beautifying Pennsylvania communities and promoting proper waste handling.

The survey showed that 85.9 percent of those polled noticed litter and trash along Pennsylvania roadways and that 90.4 percent of those responding are bothered

by roadside litter and trash. The largest percentage of respondents (69.5 percent) is bothered “a lot” by the roadside litter, and 53.4 percent notice it “often”, more than any other group.

According to the results, Pennsylvania’s litter problem is not inconsequential. A total of 71.1 percent thought there was either “a lot” or “some” litter, with 31.7 percent believing there was a lot. Only 23 percent felt there was only a “little” litter along Pennsylvania roads.

Highway landscaping also catches people’s attention. More than 73 percent (73.2 percent) noticed landscaping along the commonwealth’s highways, with the largest group (39.2 percent) noticing it “often.” A majority (53.2 percent) felt that beautifying Pennsylvania’s roadways would help to improve business and tourism in Pennsylvania.

Respondents said that Pennsylvania is certainly no cleaner than other states and dirtier than some, with 59.9 percent stating that Pennsylvania either has more (23.1 percent) or about the same (36.8 percent) amount of litter as other states. Only 12.2 percent thought Pennsylvania had less litter.

The Mansfield University Statewide Survey is a scientific telephone survey of adults in Pennsylvania. Conducted between February 13 and March 7, 2006 it contains the opinions of 1,102 respondents.

Survey results and additional information concerning roadside aesthetics may be obtained by contacting the Committee office.

FUTURE COMMITTEE PROJECTS

The Committee will continually identify environmental issues for the General Assembly’s attention. Activities range from information sharing and discussion to symposiums or public hearings. Committee members have looked ahead to identify issues where they might request Committee attention (or in some cases, additional Committee attention) in 2007. While the list is not intended to be comprehensive, it is illustrative of the range of issues that could be addressed by the Committee.

One possible future issue requiring attention is the reauthorized federal Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund. Pennsylvania, with its long mining history and 184,000 acres of abandoned mine sites (more than any other state) stands to reap the largest benefits from the fund.

The federal fund was created in 1977 as part of the federal Surface Mining and Reclamation Act. The fund contains \$1.6 billion, collected from per-ton assessments on mining companies for coal mined – at 35 cents for surface-mined coal, 15 cents for deep-mined coal and 10 cents for lignite.

Pennsylvania has received about \$25 million from the fund annually in recent years, but the new legislation would increase that amount to \$32 million in 2008, \$35 million in 2009, \$60 million in 2010 and \$90 million by 2018.

The Committee has worked extensively on mine reclamation issues in the past and could be used to help collect information and formulate a state plan to distribute the increased funding.

In addition, the Committee took an active role in developing the state's Waste Tire Recycling Law (Act 190 of 1996) and a follow-up measure to expand the original law (Act 111 of 2002). Since the legislation's enactment, the Committee has held a number of meetings and public hearings to assess its effectiveness and to seek ways to improve the state's performance in waste tire reuse and recycling.

The Committee plans to continue its discussions and work on waste tire issues in 2007. Several tours of waste tire storage facilities and tire marketing facilities have taken place throughout the year. Liberty Tire Recycling facility in Braddock, Pennsylvania in particular, handled 70 million tires in 2006, most of which were recycled for use as fuel or in products ranging from welcome mats and railroad ties to asphalt and athletic fields.

Also, on a monthly basis, the Committee will continue to invite experts to Harrisburg to speak at its popular Environmental Issues Forums (described later in this report).

In addition to the activities of the Committee itself, Committee staff works on various special projects and outreach activities on an ongoing basis. In consultation with Committee members, Committee staff attends local, state and federal policy forums, including meetings of the Delaware and Lehigh Heritage Corridor, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and other environmental events.

The Committee looks forward to working closely with the General Assembly on these and other important environmental issues during 2007.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

January 12, 2006 – Pursuant to House Resolution 137 of 2005, the Legislative Forestry Task Force and Advisory Committee held a meeting to discuss forest pests and diseases.

January 13, 2006 – Committee staff attended the Delaware and Lehigh Heritage Corridor meeting in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

January 20, 2006 – As a follow-up to the June, 2005 Environmental Issues Forum on the RecycleBank program, Committee staff traveled to Pittston, Pennsylvania to conduct an informational meeting with local officials. RecycleBank financially rewards households that recycle with coupons for goods and services.

February 1, 2006 – The Committee released its report “Oil and Gas Leasing Activities on Commonwealth-Owned Lands”, pursuant to House Resolution 394 of 2003. The report contained four recommendations regarding DCNR’s oil and gas leasing policy.

February 8, 2006 – Committee staff traveled to Washington D.C. to work with members of Congress and their staff on the “Petroleum Sesquicentennial Commemoration Act.” The bill would establish a commission to assist in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the discovery of oil at the Drake Well near Titusville, Pennsylvania and the resulting development of the American petroleum industry.

February 13, 2006 – The Committee held its first Environmental Issues Forum of the 2006 legislative session. The guest speaker was Mr. Michael McNamara of Innovative Rail Concepts. Mr. McNamara discussed the development and manufacturing plans for the firm’s unique product – a composite railroad tie manufactured primarily from recycled waste material.

April 3, 2006 – The April Environmental Issues Forum speaker was Ms. Karen McCalpin, President of External Affairs for the state office of PA Cleanways. Ms. McCalpin discussed PA Cleanways’ efforts to prevent and clean up illegal dumping across the Commonwealth.

May 4, 2006 – The Legislative Forestry Task Force and Advisory Committee met to discuss prescribed burning as a forest regeneration management tool.

May 22, 2006 – The Committee’s May Environmental Issues Forum hosted representatives from the Lafarge plant located in Whitehall, Pennsylvania. Mr. Vince Martin, Director of Environmental Affairs, discussed Lafarge’s Alternative Energy in

Manufacturing Initiative. Lafarge is partnering with Lehigh University to conduct an assessment and testing of potential alternative fuel sources.

June 12, 2006 – The June Environmental Issues Forum featured guest speaker Mr. Jim MacKenzie. Mr. MacKenzie, President and Operation Manager of Octoraro Native Plant Nursery, discussed initiatives in Pennsylvania on how native plants can be used in stream buffers and roadside plantings and how they contribute to carbon sequestration initiatives to combat global climate change.

August 25, 2006 – The Committee hosted an informal roundtable with representatives of the Pennsylvania Utility Contractors Association, DEP, and the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority to discuss the potential of standard specifications in the construction of underground utilities.

September 12, 2006 – Pursuant to House Resolution 88 of 2005, the Legislative Sewage Management and Treatment Task Force and Advisory Committee held a meeting to discuss the findings of EPA's 2000 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey as it applies to sewage treatment systems in Pennsylvania.

September 20 – 21, 2006 – Committee staff attended the second annual "Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Roadside Aesthetics Summit and Workshop" in Harrisburg. The summit, cosponsored by the Committee, examined roadside aesthetics in Pennsylvania.

October 16, 2006 – The Committee's October Environmental Issues Forum featured Ms. Alison Shuler, co-director of the Environmental Training Center (ETC) and Small Public Water Systems Technology Assistance Center at Penn State's Middletown campus. The ETC provides a variety of training for water and wastewater operators and conducts research and academic programs regarding water quality and water systems.

October 19, 2006 – The Legislative Forestry Task Force and Advisory Committee met to discuss the United States Forest Service's survey of private forest land ownership in Pennsylvania.

November 2, 2006 – The Committee held a public hearing in Sewickley, Pennsylvania to discuss the Kilbuck Township landslide. The purpose of the hearing was to review the actions and conditions leading to the landslide.

November 20, 2006 – The guest presenter at the November Environmental Issues Forum was Mr. J. Kent Crawford, Water Quality Specialist for the Pennsylvania Water Science Center of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). Mr. Crawford discussed the USGS' emerging contaminants project.

December 5, 2006 – Committee staff met with representatives of the Pittsburgh-based Regional Water Management Task Force. The Task Force is developing a work plan designed to improve how southwestern Pennsylvania manages its drinking water, stormwater and sewage.

COMMITTEE LIBRARY

The Committee maintains an extensive reference library of environmental and legal materials. A valuable resource on environmental protection, the library currently holds over 1,200 publications, many of which are unavailable elsewhere. The library holds materials that Committee staff uses for their research, as well as material useful to the public.

COMMITTEE WEBSITE

The Committee maintains a worldwide website. On this site, you can access the Committee's newsletter, the **Environmental Synopsis**, and view archived issues as well. The website also contains information regarding current Committee activities, reports and the Environmental Issues Forums.

The links page can direct you to a range of sites that identify global, national, regional, state, and local issues and perspectives.

The Committee hopes you will use the website to not only find information, but also to contact the Committee and utilize our resources. Your comments about information posted, as well as suggestions to improve the site are welcomed.

For a closer look at the Committee's website, visit <http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us>.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FORUMS

The Committee seeks to provide timely and interesting information on a variety of environmental topics to members of the General Assembly. One way in which the Committee accomplishes this is through its Environmental Issues Forums. The forums are public informational sessions at which prominent guest speakers present information on topics of interest related to the Committee's mission.

The forums are designed for the discussion of issues of interest and importance to members of the General Assembly. Forum programs are open to the public and are

intended to reach a wide audience. Participants in the forums include policy makers, scholars and business and community leaders.

COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

Environmental Synopsis

The **Environmental Synopsis** is a monthly newsletter written by the Committee staff. The newsletter covers state, national, and international environmental issues. Articles covered in 2006 included a diversity of topics ranging from the tax burdens of bankrupt polluting companies to voluntary emissions reduction programs. The **Environmental Synopsis** is distributed to all members of the General Assembly and to more than 400 other recipients including business and industry, environmental organizations, government agencies, colleges and universities and citizens.

The **Environmental Synopsis** is published by the Committee to brief decision-makers and citizens on critical issues, trends, and ideas that could impact citizens and government. Information in the synopsis does not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Committee or the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

The **Environmental Synopsis** is available in hard copy or in electronic version, as well as on the Committee's website. Please contact the Committee office at 717-787-7570 if you wish to be included on either the hard copy or electronic mailing list. Back issues are available upon request.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee has a library of more than 60 reports its staff has researched and prepared on a variety of environmental issues. They include:

1. Comprehensive Review of the Water Pollution Enforcement Program, 1970.
2. Comprehensive Review of the Municipal Solid Waste Management, 1975.
3. Integrated Flood Management: A Pennsylvania Perspective, 1981.
4. Public Utility Commission Regulation of Water Supply Systems, 1982.
5. Research Monograph: Safe Drinking Water Act, April, 1983.
6. Coal Reclamation Report: Part I. Remining Previously Affected Areas, 1984.
7. Coal Reclamation Report: Part II. General Reclamation Program, 1984.

8. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal: A Special Briefing on the Proposed Appalachian Compact, 1985.
9. Research Monograph: Pennsylvania Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal Facility Siting Criteria, September/October, 1985.
10. House Resolution No. 6, Land Application of Sewage Sludge: Part I: Administrative Issues, 1986.
11. House Resolution No. 6, Land Application of Sewage Sludge: Part II: Technical Criteria, 1986.
12. Research Monograph: Protecting Water Quality With Well Construction And Location Standards, May/June, 1986.
13. Research Monograph: Resource Recovery: An Examination Of Current Technologies, Environmental Factors, And State Air Emission Standards, October, 1986.
14. Pennsylvania's Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Needs, 1987.
15. Research Monograph: The Safe Drinking Water Amendments of 1986, February/March, 1987.
16. Research Monograph: The State Role In The New Federal Superfund Program, May/June, 1987.
17. A Review of the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act, Act 223 of 1984, as amended, 1988.
18. Pennsylvania State Parks, 1989.
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