



Citizens Advisory Council

to the Department of Environmental Protection

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January 22, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), I am writing to urge you to pass legislation establishing the Keystone Tree Fund. The Keystone Tree Fund legislation was introduced last session as SB1208 and will allow citizens to donate money through the driver's license and vehicle registration process that will support the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Tree Vitalize and Riparian Forest Buffer Grant Programs. While these are not DEP programs, DCNR's riparian buffer programs improve local water quality by stabilizing stream banks and filtering runoff and drinking water sources. These improvements benefit citizens across the Commonwealth and are also vital to meeting EPA's Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) pollution goals. This voluntary donation will allow citizens to express their interest in and grow their relationship with the protection of streams.

The Commonwealth is faced with hard decisions and difficult obstacles in complying with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. The Keystone Tree Fund, however, is just the kind of initiative that can raise a significant amount of money that will go directly towards a proven method of improving water quality without placing further strain on the state budget—truly a win-win. The sooner this bill is passed the sooner we will begin to see measurable water quality gains.

Cleaner streams mean better aquatic habitats, drinking water sources, and recreational uses. A citizen-driven volunteer fund that supports these goals and can help the Commonwealth comply with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL should be a legislative priority.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further please contact our Executive Director, Keith J. Salador, by phone at 717-787-8171 or by email at ksalador@pa.gov.

Sincerely,

Jerome Shabazz
Vice Chair
Citizens Advisory Council

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