

**MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING  
OF CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL  
July 20, 2021**

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Bob Barkanic, Lehigh County  
Jaime Bracey-Green, Philadelphia County  
Cynthia Carrow, Allegheny County  
Lori Dayton, Greene County  
Bill Fink, Bedford County  
Mitch Hescocx, York County

Duane Mowery, Cumberland County  
Jerome Shabazz, Philadelphia County  
Thad Stevens, Tioga County  
John Walliser, Allegheny County  
Jim Welty, Cumberland County  
Tim Weston, Cumberland County

**Executive Director**

Keith Salador

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Shabazz called the meeting to order at 12:30 PM.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Chairman Shabazz solicited additions or corrections to the June 15, 2021 Minutes.  
Hearing none,

**Chairman Shabazz made a motion to approve the Minutes of June 15, 2021. Mitch Hescocx seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.**

**DEP REPORT:**

Secretary McDonnell provided a brief update on the following:

*Return to Work Update*

DEP began transitioning back to working in the office. Regular telework for most DEP employees will be a part-time schedule of two days in the office and three days working from home each week. The schedule breaks agency employees into four different groups and operates on a rolling four-week cycle to ensure that the offices always have employees on site Monday through Friday.

*Budget Update*

In terms of the FY2021-22 budget, DEP saw an increase in General Fund appropriations. These general revenues are appropriated by the Legislature to pay for the Department's general expenses, including executive, administration, legal, policy, and boots on the ground for inspection and enforcement operations. DEP's FY2021 general fund appropriation is \$169.042M, which is an increase of \$12.705M from FY2020. In terms of DEP's restricted revenue accounts, which are revenues that are designated by law or administrative decision for a specific purpose, funding levels are identical to DEP's request of \$105.002M. Other DEP special funds exist, which have revenues raised from special sources named by law and are earmarked revenue that can only be spent for purposes prescribed by the law and for which the

revenues were collected. The special fund spending authority levels increased by \$80.61M from FY2020 to a total of \$348.286M in FY2021. Lastly, monies are appropriated by the Legislature for a specific time period to provide funding needed by the Department for active federal grants and grants that may become available during that fiscal year. As DEP currently has 70 open, active federal grants, the spending authority levels increased \$1.678M from FY2020 to a total of \$256.12M in FY2021.

#### *1,000 EV Chargers Installed in PA*

On June 24 the Department announced that 1,000 Level 2 electric vehicle chargers have been installed statewide using funding from the DEP Driving PA Forward program, with 71% installed on privately-owned property by companies, organizations, and condo and apartment complex owners at more than 300 locations in 39 counties across the state and 29% installed on government-owned property. An additional 140 funded charging station projects are in process. These projects will add at least 500 more plugs and bring the number of counties with at least one charger funded by Driving PA Forward to 45. According to the most recent data available from PennDOT, 28,460 electric vehicles (battery and plug-in hybrid) were registered in Pennsylvania as of February 2021, significantly more than three years ago when only 11,347 electric vehicles were registered in December 2017. Over half of the Level 2 rebate program's available funding has been committed to completed or active projects, so the Department strongly recommends that interested organizations apply soon while funding is still available.

#### *DEP Solar Energy Resource Hub Website*

A new DEP Solar Energy Resource Hub website has been developed for the evolving solar energy landscape in Pennsylvania. The creation of this centralized hub of information regarding solar development is mainly in response to Pennsylvania's Solar Future Project that targets 10% of electricity (11GW) from in-state solar by 2030. The new Solar Resource Hub can be found by visiting [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov), clicking on "Citizens" and then choosing "Solar." The site will continue to be updated as new resources and information become available.

#### *2020 Oil and Gas Annual Report Release*

On June 30 the Department released its 2020 Oil and Gas Annual Report which indicates that Pennsylvania produced about 7.1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas compared to about 6.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in 2019. The Department issued only 1,017 permits in 2020 compared to 1,705 in 2019. Oil and gas operators drilled a total of 527 oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania in 2020, including 476 unconventional wells and 51 conventional oil wells. The number of unconventional wells drilled since 2017 continues to decrease each year from 810 wells to 527 in 2020. In 2020, DEP conducted 25,883 compliance inspections compared to 35,394 compliance inspections in 2019 which decrease was mainly due to adjustments made to inspection protocols taken by DEP to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus during 2020. To protect DEP inspection personnel and the regulated community, DEP focused its inspection priorities on emergency response situations and responses to public complaints in early 2020. DEP inspectors also focused on administrative-related inspections. Over the course of 2020, as DEP inspectors became more proficient in conducting inspections under the revised COVID inspection protocols, inspection efficiencies improved, and the number of inspections conducted in each quarter of 2020 increased throughout the year. The total number of compliance violations assessed by DEP increased from 5,496 in 2019 to 9,363 in 2020. This increase is due to a higher

number of violations at pipeline projects as well as erosion and sedimentation-related violations. DEP also observed a greater number of administrative violations in 2020, such as failure of operators to submit annual production reports and well integrity reports. Lastly, in 2020, \$33 million in fines and penalties was collected; however, the \$30.6 million civil penalty in response to the 2018 Revolution Pipeline explosion and fire explosion accounted for about 93 percent of the total.

#### *Reminder on Air Quality Action Days*

As required by the Clean Air Act, EPA has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and particulate matter to protect human health and the environment. Using meteorological forecasts, data from air quality monitors in Pennsylvania and surrounding states, computer modeling, and experience, DEP issues daily forecasts related to ozone for various regions throughout the state from May through September and related to fine particulate matter for various regions all year. An Air Quality Action Day is issued by DEP when the Air Quality Index is forecasted to be Code Orange or worse.

### **PRESENTATIONS:**

#### **Land Banks**

##### **Winnie Branton, Founder of President of Branton Strategies LLC**

Land banks are governmental entities created by ordinance to provide strategies for addressing abandoned, vacant, and tax delinquent properties that lower property values and impose significant costs on local and county governments. Many of the properties have heavier liens and taxes due than the property is worth. There are often issues with title being passed down from generation to generation such that the properties have trouble being exchanged on the open market and many owners are either unwilling or unable to comply with property maintenance requirements. Land banks are one tool to help return blighted properties back into productive use and back on the tax rolls.

##### **An Lewis, Executive Director of the TRI-COG Land Bank**

Tri-COG Land Bank was established at the end of 2017 and began acquiring properties in 2018 with the central goal of identifying abandoned and blighted properties and stewarding them back into productive use. TRI-COG is data driven and has GIS to help manage its own properties and to help community members, municipalities, and school districts make decisions based on the data. TRI-COG works with code and municipal officials, nonprofit organizations, and community groups, and focuses on building partnerships.

##### **Andrea Mannino, Associate Director of Research and Evaluation, Housing Alliance of PA**

The Housing Alliance is a statewide coalition working to provide leadership and a common voice for policies, practices, and resources to ensure that all Pennsylvanians, especially those with low incomes, have access to safe, decent, and affordable homes. It promotes common-sense solutions to balance Pennsylvania's housing market and increase the supply of safe, decent homes for low-income people. Ms. Mannino discussed legislation to address blight and the prevention of it, the creation of the PA Land Bank Network in 2020, an overview of land banks, and a look to the future.

## **CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### ***Environmental Quality Board***

The EQB passed the RGGI rulemaking by a vote of 15-4, and the rulemaking will now make its way to IRRC for approval.

### ***Act 54 Committee***

The committee met by phone to talk through the draft technical guidance document shared by the Department and to set up an internal to do list in terms of providing feedback on that internally. The committee plans to bring in a few outside experts to help it better understand the guidance.

### ***Public Participation Committee***

The committee is still reviewing potential ways to increase public participation in existing formats and will report back to the CAC in September.

### ***Policy & Regulatory Oversight Committee***

Trisha Salvia is now a member.

### ***Strategic Issues Committee***

Bob Barkanic has stepped down as Chairman of the Strategic Issues Committee. Jacqui Bonomo is now a member of the committee.

### ***Legislative Committee***

Bob Barkanic and Trisha Salvia are now members.

### ***Other Committees***

Several members expressed interest in serving on additional committees. Trisha Salvia would like to be an alternate for the EQB.

**Chairman Shabazz made a motion that Trisha Salvia be approved as an alternate on the EQB. John Walliser seconded the motion, and all were in favor.**

Lori Dayton expressed interest in serving on the Mining Reclamation Advisory Board and the Aggregate Advisory Committee.

**Chairman Shabazz made a motion that Lori Dayton be approved to join the Mining Reclamation Advisory Board and the Aggregate Advisory Committee. Thad Stevens seconded the motion, and all were in favor.**

### ***EPA Clean Air Act Advisory Committee***

Mitch Hescox sits on this EPA committee and inquired if the CAC would be interested in receiving a report after the upcoming meeting. Chairman Shabazz will make room on the September agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION:**

There will be no August meeting of the CAC. The September 21 CAC meeting is anticipated to be a virtual meeting, but an effort will be made to meet face-to-face for the October 19 meeting. Webex will still be available for those who cannot attend in person.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With no further business, Chairman Shabazz moved to adjourn the meeting. Thad Stevens seconded the motion, and all were in favor. The July 20, 2021 meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 2:50 PM.**