

**MINUTES OF
CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL
February 11, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER:

Bob Barkanic, CAC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 12:37 PM.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CAC) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bob Barkanic, Chairperson	Duane Mowery
Trisha Salvia, Vice-Chairperson	Jerome Shabazz
George Ambrose	Thad Stevens
Jacqueline Bonomo	John St. Clair
Carol Collier	John Walliser
Bill Fink	Jim Welty
Jason Foster	Tim Weston

DEP STAFF PRESENT:

Ian Irvin, Executive Director
Casey Damicantonio, Policy Office
Joshua Neyhart, Policy Office

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Barkanic solicited additions or corrections to the January 14, 2025 Minutes. Hearing none:

**Jason Foster motioned to approve the Minutes of the January 14, 2025 meeting.
Jerome Shabazz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.**

CAC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Public Participation Committee

The committee was not able to meet last week, and the meeting will be rescheduled.

Legislative Committee

Executive Director Ian Irvin highlighted some of the bills that the committee thinks will be or have already been reintroduced. One item of interest includes food processing residual waste bills. The committee's focus will be on bills that are in the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee, the House Energy Committee, as well as the Senate Environmental Resources Committee, which Ian has already begun tracking in a spreadsheet. Governor Shapiro's proposed budget was recently announced, which increased DEP's budget, and the committee is beginning to look at the Lightning Plan recently announced in terms of energy and other projects.

DEP UPDATE:

Overview

- Governor Shapiro presented his 2025-26 budget proposal to the General Assembly and the people of Pennsylvania focusing on workforce development, reducing health care costs housing, and energy costs, and investing in economic development while continuing to advance bipartisan efforts to support Pennsylvania students - all while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Energy

- Governor Shapiro has proposed an energy plan, known as the “Lightning Plan,” intended to create energy jobs, lower energy costs for consumers, protect Pennsylvania from global instability by building next generation power, and position the Commonwealth to continue to be a national energy leader for decades to come. The Governor’s initiatives would save Pennsylvania energy customers \$664 million by 2040, while generating \$11.4 billion in investment in clean, reliable energy sources.
- Governor Shapiro is working to power Pennsylvania’s energy sector by proposing the Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition Board (RESET Board). RESET is a much-needed tool to speed up siting and permitting decisions, cut red tape, and ensure that the next generation of energy projects are built here in Pennsylvania.
- The Pennsylvania Climate Emissions Reduction Act (PACER) would establish a Pennsylvania-specific cap-and-invest program that allows Pennsylvania to determine its own cap on carbon and invest directly in lowering consumers’ electricity bills. Under PACER, 70% of the revenue generated would be directed back to Pennsylvania residents as a rebate on their electric bill.
- The Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standard (PRESS) would build a more diverse, reliable, and affordable energy sector. Over the last two decades, Pennsylvania’s energy standards have become outdated, impacting its ability to remain competitive. The Governor’s updated version of this proposal will update energy portfolio standards and incentivize companies to innovate and build new forms of energy, including nuclear energy and affordable, renewable sources like battery storage.

DEP Specific

- Overall, there is an increase in the General Fund of 12% from to \$235 million to \$262.7 million in the proposal. Highlights of the budget include about 3 dozen new DEP positions: 20 positions to support IJA well plugging and abandoned mine reclamation work, 15 positions (10 of which will support the management of agricultural runoff into the Chesapeake Bay and four other general funded programs), and one additional fiscal support position.
- There is a proposed \$700,000 increase to cover the anticipated loss of DOH funding in the vector borne disease line item.
- The budget proposal also includes a bump to the Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Source Abatement Fund by 59%, from \$3.672 million to \$5,863 million.

- The well plugging fund will receive a boost of about \$8 million.

Federal Issues

- Until DEP hears otherwise, the agency continues to review federal guidance to understand potential impacts to DEP work.

SPEED (Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development)

- The Act was included in this year's budget. As required, a tracking system was established that went live in early February 2025 allowing the public and permit applicants to track the status of permit applications. Any pending permits that were submitted after November 1, 2023, can be tracked using this electronic tool.
- DEP is continuing to review bid packages submitted by consultants desiring to participate in the program. There are approximately 60 professionals that are deemed qualified to participate in the program. DEP is working on Standard Operating Procedures and is hoping to launch the program by spring 2025. Information on this will be posted to the website.
- Chapter 102 - This pilot program is meant to improve the quality of permit submissions by requiring two preapplication meetings. Several applications have been received on the 102 pilot. DEP is monitoring how much time is being saved by moving those applications through the process and measuring staff time versus efficiency. One permit has gone through the process and successfully reduced the processing time by 73 business days.
- Chapter 105 - There are no participants in this pilot program.

Q&A included DEP general fund line items, redundancy and difficulty found by contractor who recently applied for MERP plugging on a private well, and lengthy details on implementation of the SPEED program.

Duane Mowery expressed thanks to Secretary Shirley for taking time out of her schedule to address and legitimize the work done by professionals in the PA Association of Sewage Enforcement Officers and the PA Septic Management Association at a recent combined conference.

PRESENTATION:

Nicholas Deiuliis, President and CEO of CNX Resources Corp.

This presentation discussed: (1) The concept of radical transparency to help guide public policy decision-making around responsible Pennsylvania natural gas development; (2) Collecting specified, site-level data using monitors equipped with the latest data collection technology guided by federal and industry criteria and taking best management practices of CNX to the next level to provide the most comprehensive review of operations throughout development phases; (3) Driving meaningful methane emission reductions with aggressive goals to maintain a low intensity profile while expanding the operational footprint; (4) providing timely and relatable air quality data through utilization of a publicly-available dashboard "Context Corner" series which translates data into digestible information, thereby eliminating speculation; (5) expanded water

quality monitoring and radiation protection safeguards beyond regulatory requirements and industry standards; and (6) expanding the number of sites until radical transparency covers all unconventional CNX operations, supplementing the scope of data collected and transparently shared as the program matures, partnering with DEP to provide independent monitoring before, during, and after the development of new wells, and providing real-time data to inform future public policy and ensuring transparent and responsible natural gas development.

Q&A included types of locations, monitoring, and chain of custody, raw data reporting, how data is being obtained and read, chain of custody of the data, how neighbors were notified of availability of the data and what the reaction has been, and whether CNX improved its activities or continued to operate as it had prior to the program.

PRESENTATION:

**Dr. Allen Dieterich-Ward: New Book - Cradle of Conservation
Professor of History and Director of the Graduate School at Shippensburg University and
Member of the Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Project**

Pennsylvanians continue to grapple with the regulatory balance between natural resource consumption and conservation, and the crisis of climate change adds urgency to viewing history through an environmental lens. Even as many residents proved willing to embrace an ethic linking their own health and wellbeing to the rest of the natural world, since the 1970s an anti-environmental movement that questions additional regulation has gained momentum in the wake of deindustrialization. That has proven especially contentious in tandem with demands for “environmental justice.” The scientific consensus about the need to decrease the burning of fossil fuels has done little to dampen a new energy boom in the natural gas fields of the state’s north and west. The relative power of the state’s energy-producing regions forced a more limited approach to environmental politics. In the end, the ambivalence toward environmental protection, particularly when it seems to conflict with economic opportunity, made an ideal case study for his book.

Q&A included acknowledgement of Dr. Goddard’s work in bringing the management of water resources into the 20th Century, his work at the River Basin Commission, and his 24 years in state government carrying forth his efforts of conservation and environmental protection, and the ways in which lived landscapes are impacting conservation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Jodi Borello, Washington County Community Organizer, The Center for Coalfield Justice
DEP and the Office of the Governor should drop all collaboration with CNX as the company has a long history of wrongdoing and criminal activity. Her family has been the victim of CNX horrors for over 13 years. She and her neighbors are prepared and ready to be radically transparent about what is happening in her community at the hands of CNX.

Alison Steele is the Executive Director of the Environmental Health Project, a non-partisan non-profit organization headquartered in Pittsburgh with the mission of defending public health in the face of shale gas development.

If the goal is truly the health and safety of frontline communities, CAC should push for more comprehensive and meaningful community engagement when it comes to decision-making around shale gas activities within our borders, to utilize healthy skepticism with reports like these and to remember that there are legitimate health concerns and well-earned mistrust on the part of residents whose lives have been impacted, sometimes irreparably, by this industry and that we already have wealth of existing scientific information from unbiased sources pointing to very real health risks that are not being addressed by the radical transparency program.

Shannon Smith, Executive Director of FracTracker Alliance

CAC should take the following actions to protect public health and environmental integrity in Pennsylvania: (1) reject CNX's radical transparency program as a credible source for policymaking; (2) strengthen regulatory oversight of industry self-reporting; and (3) ensure public policy is based on independent, peer-reviewed science.

Christina DiGiulio, Environmental Chemist with Environmental Physicians for Social Responsibility of Pennsylvania

The radical transparency program is riddled with scientific shortcomings. Logical thinkers are encouraged to practice holistic research to gain a full picture of the impact on communities who have been historically extracted, left with the burdens, and are now being asked to accept it again without being fully informed in the name of economics. CNX claims that their current operations produce no risks to public health but lack any peer reviewed evidence to support their false claims. CNX has historically harmed this community and has never been held fully accountable for its behavior. Using these communities of legacy harm as another scientific study is grossly unethical and must be normalized as unacceptable. The industry needs to first repair their historical harm, acknowledge and be accountable for deploying a dangerous industrial process in residential and rural areas without doing impact studies. Progress requires change, but not all change is progress.

Tom Pike, Environmental Policy Advocate with Protect PT

CNX has been a rampant and unrepentant polluter. It has logged countless violations with DEP. It has been given free license by our regulators and water authorities to operate however they want. Radical transparency is a branding choice, but we have not seen changes on the ground that reflect it. Be wary of promises from this corporation that are not verified by Pennsylvania residents who live near CNX operations.

NEW BUSINESS/OPEN DISCUSSION

By-Laws

Suggested By-Law changes were sent to the Council members and comments and edits were received from several members. Tim Weston and the Executive Director had discussions on certain provisions of the Writings and Actions and came to an agreement and path forward, which the Executive Director shared with the Council early to mid-January. The Bylaw changes added email on top of phone calls and letters in line with current technology. A portion of the Writings and Actions were clarified that the Council's records, and not the Secretary's records, will be included in the meeting materials for the subsequent Council meeting so that members of the public will have notice. It will be an item for discussion so it will be publicly available, and members of the public can comment on that action. At times the By-Laws referred to the

Secretary of DEP, but other times it referred to the Secretary of Council. The Executive Director read through to determine which of the two Secretaries was being referenced. Spacing, spelling, and enumerations were corrected, but the genesis of the changes was guidance from the Policy Office about advisory committees, boards, and councils. Public comments are changed to three minutes to accommodate public commenters and the time period in each meeting for public comments. The By-Law changes will bring CAC into the Policy Office guidance that was issued back in June 2024.

Tim Weston motioned to approve the By-Law changes. Jerome Shabazz seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Public Comments

George Ambrose would suggest that public speakers' written comments be transmitted to the relevant subcommittees of the Council for further follow-up and the subcommittee reach out to the presenter advising that the matter will be taken under advisement.

ADJOURNMENT:

Thad Stevens motioned to adjourn the meeting. George Ambrose seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The February 11 meeting of the CAC was adjourned at 3:24.