



Dear County Representative;

First, thank you for all of the local improvements that are leading to cleaner water throughout much of Pennsylvania. The efforts of partners at all levels of government and community have led to positive change both locally and for downstream neighbors. Also, thank you in advance for reviewing the attached “Community Clean Water Plan,” designed for your county. The importance of your role in this effort cannot be overstated.

You may know that Pennsylvania’s waterways are in need of all of our help. Approximately 19,000 miles of these waters are impaired, but right now, we have a unique opportunity to turn this around. As a state rich in water and one with important economies centered around tourism and agriculture, not to mention the millions of residents that rely on our water sources for drinking water, it is extremely important to protect and improve our local water quality. For the first time, communities can prioritize clean water efforts based on local understanding of the waterways and community needs.

Local involvement in the cleanup of local waterways gives you a say in how it gets done, how improvements are prioritized, and which mix of cost-effective solutions are utilized. There are many benefits to implementing best management practices (BMPs) and clean water, such as:

- increased health and vitality to our many sport and recreational fisheries,
- more miles of streams usable for recreation such as kayaking and swimming
- maintaining or increasing water suitable for drinking water while possibly reducing treatment costs in the long term.
- improved conditions at local farms by retaining soil and improving soil and herd health

Ultimately, your involvement and commitment to your community gives us the best chance at achieving clean water in the Commonwealth.

Please consider participating in development of your “Community Clean Water Plan,” and look forward to working with you. In the meantime, the following information outlines a few of the specific details to help bring you up to speed. What follows in your “Community Clean Water Plan,” document is expanded information about the effort, and the role your county may play in achieving clean water along with county-specific tools, data, and resources to ensure success. (Could end as a letter with a signature or just move on to content)



The County Role in Developing a “Community Clean Water Plan”

Who: Anyone that cares about water quality and the role it plays in a healthy and vibrant community. County level groups and programs like conservation districts and planning groups, and other local groups and clubs. Statewide partners such as Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency can and will provide technical assistance throughout the planning process.

What: Development of county-specific “Community Clean Water Plans” to assist Pennsylvania in meeting local clean water goals and federal clean water requirements, by engaging each of the 43 counties within the Bay watershed. Through the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, Pennsylvania is required to meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reduction goals.

Where: Forty-three of Pennsylvania’s counties, those that lie in the Susquehanna River Basin, contribute pollution to the River and the Bay. Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, and Washington DC are all required to meet Chesapeake Bay TMDL reduction goals.

When: Now. The sooner improvements are made, the sooner the benefits are realized. The EPA and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania signed the Chesapeake Bay Agreement in 2010 with a deadline to meet TMDL reductions by 2025, in just seven years.

Why: Local water quality improvement will mean more livable communities and recreational opportunities for Pennsylvania residents and tourists. When we improve local waterways, we in turn also provide multiple benefits to the Chesapeake Bay.

How: Get involved. The success of this effort will come down to leadership at the local level. While we have technical resources, data to analyze, tools to aid in prioritization and technical assistance to offer, we need a leader at the local level to connect with local stakeholders and maintain momentum that is built.



Why is this the right time?

Pennsylvania has over 86,000 miles of waterways. Unfortunately, over 19,000 miles are impaired. It is extremely important to protect and improve our local water quality, for our economies such as agriculture and tourism, for clean drinking water, and to ensure clean water for future generations.

The beginning of Pennsylvania’s clean water efforts date back to the signing of the original Chesapeake Bay Agreement in 1983. Improvements are happening in local waterways and in those waters that reach the Bay, just not quickly enough to meet our current federal obligations under the most recent Agreement, signed in 2010. In 2010 the EPA developed Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for each of the jurisdictions within the Bay watershed. The timeline for meeting the pollution reductions outlined in the TMDL is 2025.

The TMDL requires jurisdictions to develop a Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that outlines how pollution reductions and obligation will be met by 2025. Pennsylvania developed a WIP that was intended to start us on our efforts and then developed a Phase 2 WIP to further those efforts. The final step in that process is the Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan or WIP 3, as it is often referenced. The Watershed Implementation Plan will

guide efforts through 2025, and is being developed from the “ground up” with the involvement of many local partners.

Why focus on local involvement and partnerships?

In past efforts, Pennsylvania looked at the development of the Watershed Implementation Plan as a state obligation but did not involve the various sectors that were impacted in the development. This time the development is being done with involvement and planning at the local level. One key decision point that has been made by the various stakeholders involved in the process is that plans will be developed and implemented at the county level. In doing so, for the first time, local communities have the ability to prioritize efforts based on their understanding of the waterways and community. This does not mean that there are any obligations placed on county governments. The WIP remains a set of state level obligations, but it clearly makes sense to break down those obligations.

No one understands your community, local economy, local waterways and your ability to rise to a challenge better than you. Your involvement in the cleanup of local waterways gives you say in how this gets done, how improvements are prioritized and which mix of cost-effective solutions are chosen within your county.

In recognizing the challenge ahead, we should also recognize the opportunity. While Pennsylvania has an obligation to meet, that obligation can be met in a variety of ways, some more beneficial than others, and some that could come with additional costs.

The importance of local leadership, particularly a leadership group with an established relationship with the local community, cannot be overstated, as trust will be a critical component of our success as a whole.

Assistance from state and federal technical experts is available to help guide these local planning efforts.