

Healthy Waters, Healthy Communities

Dear [Name],

I am writing to invite you to join us in improving the health of streams and rivers in Pennsylvania. **The Department of Environmental Protection and our partners are looking for community leaders like you to step up and spearhead the preparation of a Countywide Action Plan for [COUNTY].**

Leaders in this effort have the opportunity to clean up waterways, lower flood risks, and improve the quality of life in their community. We developed pollution reduction goals for [COUNTY]. As a part of the Countywide Action Plan leadership team, you'll have a say in how your county meets these goals. This step comes as Pennsylvania, and neighboring states, begin the third phase of cleanup of the Susquehanna and Potomac rivers and their tributaries.

In this phase we are inviting each county to decide for themselves how to reduce their share of the pollution reaching those rivers. We believe that Pennsylvania will be more successful with a bottom-up approach, steered by local leaders like you. You know what actions (e.g. environmental education, public works investments, stream restoration projects, assistance to streamside property owners) will work best.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection will guide you every step of the way. We also encourage you to involve leaders from environmental and outdoor groups, agriculture, forestry, construction, local businesses, as well as a diverse group of other community organizations or interested citizens that might not typically be involved in the process. To help, we prepared a Community Clean Water Toolbox. It contains facilitation guides, worksheets, and other useful templates and resources.

Pennsylvania first began cleanup work of the Susquehanna, Potomac and their tributaries in 1983, and there is a lot of progress to be proud of! However, there is more to do. Of the nearly 49,000 assessed miles of streams in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, 11,446 still need to be cleaned up. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency set specific expectations for Pennsylvania to meet by 2025, but has given lots of flexibility in how to meet the goals. **If the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency determines that Pennsylvania is falling short of its cleanup responsibilities, it may step in.** If this happens, likely consequences include:

- Subjecting more livestock operations and municipalities to federal regulations
- Requiring additional reductions from point sources, such as wastewater and industrial facilities
- Imposing new water quality standards stream-by-stream in Pennsylvania
- EPA funding may be redirected or withheld

[Name,] I believe you have the capabilities to steer [COUNTY] in developing its Countywide Action Plan. If you choose to lead this process, you can expect to lead planning meetings and conference calls, facilitate stakeholders through completion of worksheets, and submit a completed Countywide Action Plan. For your convenience, I have attached a fact sheet that provides more background about this process. **We need a completed Countywide Action Plan from your county by [DATE].**

If you want to be a leader or learn more about getting involved, please provide us with your contact information using this simple online form: <http://bit.ly/wip3-cap>

Can we count on you to seize this opportunity?

For healthy waters and communities in Pennsylvania,

Senior Leader at DEP