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**Bucks County**

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Pat Lupo, O.S.B.

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Joyce A. Hatala

**Lancaster County**

Jolene E. Chinchilli

**Lehigh County**

Janet B. Keim

**Montgomery County**

Curtis N. Kratz

**Tioga County**

Thaddeus K. Stevens

**Union County**

Peter R. Wilshusen, Ph.D.

TO: Members of the General Assembly

RE: Statement of Concern Regarding Further Cutting Environmental Funds

DATE: June 24, 2010

While we recognize that Pennsylvania faces a significant budget shortfall, the Citizens Advisory Council<sup>1</sup> to DEP is frustrated to learn that consideration is being given to further cutting special environmental funds in the state budget. According to media reports, a total of \$132 million in suspensions and transfers from environmental funds has been proposed, including:

- Growing Greener - \$12 million in transfers and \$29.8 million in suspensions,
- Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund - \$54.8 million in suspensions,
- Clean Air Fund - \$8 million in transfers,
- Agriculture Easement Purchase Fund - \$20.4 million in suspensions.

Pennsylvania's environmental initiatives and agencies have absorbed significant budget cuts over the last several years. For example, continued cuts to the Department of Environmental Protection have reduced its General Fund appropriation to a level not seen since the 1990s. In addition to these cutbacks in DEP's general fund budget, a number of DEP's other funds have been repeatedly raided in recent years. These special funds were created in law for specific purposes, and were created with the public's support. Diverting them away from the intended use to unrelated purposes, such as balancing the state budget, flies in the face of the public's will.

Environmental quality is critical to attracting and retaining companies and their employees, as well as tourists. We want Pennsylvania to be a place with a high quality of life: a place where people now and in the future will want to live, work, recreate and invest, not a place in a perpetual state of cleanup and remediation. Pennsylvania's Constitution requires that our natural resources also be available to future generations of residents. We need to heal for the future, not steal from it.

We urge you to take a strong stand for Pennsylvania's future by protecting Growing Greener, Keystone and other long-standing environmental initiatives. Please protect environmental funding from further cuts.

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<sup>1</sup> The Citizens Advisory Council is legislatively charged with providing advice on environmental issues to DEP, the Governor and the General Assembly.