



JULY 21, 2015

COMMENTS OF JOANNE KILGOUR, DIRECTOR OF THE SIERRA CLUB
PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER TO DEP'S CITIZENS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Good afternoon. My name is Joanne Kilgour and I am the Director of the Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter. Our Chapter has more than 24,000 members statewide, with 10 volunteer-led groups in each region of the Commonwealth. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today, and for your work on this Council.

I would first like to thank the CAC for your action on the Act 54 report – your interest in and attention to the impacts of underground mining in Pennsylvania has been appreciated, not only by our members but also by other local residents who are impacted by longwall mining and related activities.

Today I wanted to provide the CAC with an introduction to the Clean Rivers Campaign, a coalition of six organizations dedicated to ensuring that the communities and ratepayers in the Allegheny County Sanitary Authority (ALCOSAN) get the maximum benefits back from their \$3 billion investment to fix the antiquated water and sewer infrastructure and to adopt a green-first approach to solving the sewer overflow problem.

The organizations in the CRC are Sierra Club, Action United, Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, Clean Water Action and Nine Mile Run Watershed Association.

Our campaign is dedicated to ratepayer fairness in this, the largest ever public works investment in the history of Allegheny County – the overhaul of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County's water and sewer systems . We have been working to achieve:

- maximum green investments that return the greatest benefits to region in terms of jobs, improved communities and higher water quality
- a customer assistance program to ensure that water and waste service are affordable for low-income residents

- parties paying their fair share throughout this project – including entities that now pay little to ALCOSAN but contribute large amounts of stormwater to the system.

In the four years that the campaign that has been working ratepayers and advocates have moved the ball a long way and now we are hoping for continued support from the Department, and also the support of this Council to move ALCOSAN toward a green-first approach to this public works project.

We want to acknowledge and thank DEP for heeding the request from Mayor Bill Peduto and Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald to grant communities in the ALCOSAN service area 18 months to rethink ALCOSAN's direction from one reliant upon "grey" infrastructure to explore the opportunities and cost-savings a green-first approach would offer. Now, we need your help to make sure we take maximum advantage of this great opportunity. During this period we need to create a comprehensive regional vision that maximizes green infrastructure to comply with water quality standards so we can show DEP and EPA that our region is ready for and wants to do green.

The campaign has asked for a meeting with DEP staff to discuss strategies to make that happen. We look forward to the meeting and hope that together we can ensure that ALCOSAN ratepayers get the maximum benefits from their \$3 billion investment. Any support from the CAC for this approach would be welcome. Thank you.