



Open Letter to
Members of the General Assembly and Governor Wolf
November 18, 2020

93% of Pennsylvanians agree—68% strongly—that “we have a moral obligation to take care of our environment.” Whether the focus is protecting waterways, protecting wildlife and natural areas, the importance of parks and open spaces, or preserving productive farms, overwhelming supermajorities of Pennsylvanians find these environmental matters “very important.” These feelings cross party lines; for example, “protecting PA’s drinking water” is found to be very important by 75% of Republicans, 84% of Independents, and 92% of Democrats.

Moreover, 9 in 10 voters agree that even with the present tight budget, we should still find the money to invest in protecting Pennsylvania's land, water and wildlife (87 percent agree), that protecting water quality and land in Pennsylvania is critical to keeping the state's economy strong (90 percent agree), and that it is more important to have parks, preserves, and other public spaces where we can safely enjoy the outdoors (91 percent agree). Notably, there is substantial intensity behind these attitudes, as broad majorities report strongly agreeing with each sentiment.ⁱ

The numbers demonstrate that Pennsylvanians care deeply about the environment and want to ensure that state investments in projects that support our parks and public open spaces, protect water and wildlife, and provide other environmental benefits continue—no matter the present crisis.

In addition to being strongly supported by the public, investing in Pennsylvania’s environment makes strong fiscal sense. It is well established that state environmental investments provide tremendous rates of return—whether the measure is job creation and economic activity, costs avoided (such as public health and flooding), net tax revenues, or the wellbeing of people and communities.ⁱⁱ

The widely acclaimed **Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund** and **Environmental Stewardship Fund** are proven vehicles for making environmental investments and keeping Pennsylvania communities great places to live, work, and play. Good for the environment, good for the economy, it is more important than ever to keep Keystone and ESF investments flowing. With pandemic-driven fundamental shifts underway in the economy and businesses and skilled workers looking more than ever at quality of life in making location

decisions, the General Assembly should be considering how it might increase investments through these time-tested funds.

For more information, please reach out to the people and organizations of the Coalition including but not limited to:

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ⁱ TargetSmart survey of 1,332 likely PA voters conducted September 20-27, 2020; credibility interval of +/- 3.0%

ⁱⁱ See *Pennsylvania's Return on Investment in the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund* and other studies in the [Economic Benefits](#) section of <https://conservationtools.org>.