

June 1, 2021

Dear Governor Wolf and Members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly:

We, the undersigned groups of the conservation, business, environmental protection, and faith communities, are writing today to ask your support for increasing clean water funding—specifically, dedicated funding through a program such as the creation of a Clean Streams Fund as well as a reinvigorated Growing Greener III program.

Pennsylvania is faced with a unique opportunity. The recent passage of the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* provides the Commonwealth with \$7 billion in federal funds. We're advocating that a portion of this money—at least \$500 million¹—should be invested in our water resources which in turn supports jobs, a vibrant recreation economy, and supplies our drinking water. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership found that outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania contributes to over 390,000 jobs with a total value of \$26.9 billion, including over \$7 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue.

Poll after poll demonstrates wide, bipartisan support for increases in state investments for clean water. Most recently, a poll commissioned by Conservation Voters of PA and the Growing Greener Coalition in the fall of 2020 showed that nearly 90 percent of voters support funding for Pennsylvania's land, water and wildlife, even during the economic downturn of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We ask all members of the General Assembly and Governor Wolf to stand with voters and protect our waterways by providing dedicated funding to watershed improvement and best management practice implementation and reinvigorating Growing Greener III.

Growing Greener III

These funds provide critical support to community-driven work that improves and protects our cities and towns. Since 1999, Growing Greener has been a lifeline to conservation and clean water projects across the state. These investments bring lasting benefits to communities across Pennsylvania from clean water to open spaces to recreational pursuits for Pennsylvanians and tourists alike. Examples and success stories from these investments can be found on the Environmental Stewardship Fund's website: <https://esfund.info/>.

Growing Greener was established with bipartisan support in the General Assembly as well as in public referenda and they continue to receive overwhelming public support today. In March, Senators John Gordner and Bob Mensch released a co-sponsor memo for support of a Growing Greener III program that would use \$500 million from the American Recuse Plan funding to invest in our water resources and benefit our farmers, towns, and more.

¹ Combined cosponsor memos call for \$750 million. We urge your support for the maximum level of investments in clean water.

Clean Stream Fund

Pennsylvania is blessed to be a water rich state with 86,000 miles of streams. However, around one-third of our streams are polluted. A dedicated fund devoted solely to cleaning up and protecting our waterways will support jobs and benefit Pennsylvania's economy, towns, and farmers. In March, Senators Gene Yaw, Scott Martin, and Daniel Laughlin put forth a co-sponsor memo that would create the Clean Streams Fund using \$250 million from the American Rescue Plan.

For years, our groups have called on increased investments for our water resources. Now is the time to act. We thank you for supporting healthy rivers and streams across the Commonwealth. Please contact Ezra Thrush at thrush@pennfuture.org with questions or for more information.

Respectfully submitted,

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