
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 283 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY BRUBAKER, KASUNIC, DINNIMAN, WASHINGTON, STOUT,
PIPPY, TARTAGLIONE, COSTA, ERICKSON, TOMLINSON, C. WILLIAMS,
WOZNIAK, GREENLEAF, A. WILLIAMS, PUNT, O'PAKE, FERLO,
RAFFERTY, KITCHEN AND WAUGH, APRIL 3, 2008

REFERRED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, APRIL 3, 2008

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing the accomplishments of Franklin & Marshall College
2 Professors Robert C. Walter and Dorothy J. Merritts for their
3 extensive research on legacy sediment and on the publishing
4 of their findings in the journal Science.

5 WHEREAS, Geologists have studied the flow of streams in the
6 Mid-Atlantic States for decades, concluding that they naturally
7 move in ribbonlike channels cut through silty banks; and

8 WHEREAS, The findings of Professors Robert C. Walter and
9 Dorothy J. Merritts have challenged this conclusion in a study
10 published in the January 18, 2008, issue of the journal Science;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Over the course of a five-year study, Professor
13 Walter and Professor Merritts have concluded that what were
14 thought to be naturally meandering streams are actually the
15 result of colonial milldams and deforestation; and

16 WHEREAS, Professor Walter and Professor Merritts argue that
17 over the last 300 years, large volumes of eroded soils became
18 trapped behind the estimated 16,000 to 18,000 dams that were

1 constructed across this Commonwealth to create tens of thousands
2 of millponds for industry; and

3 WHEREAS, The discovery of these legacy sediments has
4 considerable implications for stream-restoration efforts in the
5 eastern United States, including valuable flood-control
6 measures, stabilization of streambanks, restoration of wetland
7 areas and connection of riparian areas and floodplains to
8 groundwater, all of which have the potential to significantly
9 reduce nutrient and sediment loadings to local waters and the
10 Chesapeake Bay; and

11 WHEREAS, Professor Walter's and Professor Merritts'
12 scientific skills, professionalism and ability to communicate
13 this new information has provided invaluable assistance to this
14 Commonwealth and its partners in understanding stream dynamics
15 and integrating this knowledge into restoration efforts of the
16 Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries; therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That the Senate recognize this pioneering
18 contribution of Franklin & Marshall College Professors Robert C.
19 Walter and Dorothy J. Merritts; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That the Senate congratulate Franklin & Marshall
21 College Professors Robert C. Walter and Dorothy J. Merritts for
22 the publishing of their innovative legacy sediment study in the
23 journal Science.