

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 17 Session of
2009

INTRODUCED BY HARPER, ADOLPH, ARGALL, BARRAR, BEYER, BOYD,
CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER, FAIRCHILD, GEORGE, GODSHALL, HENNESSEY,
HUTCHINSON, MUSTIO, RAPP, READSHAW, SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH,
STERN, SWANGER, VULAKOVICH, WATSON AND MAJOR,
JANUARY 26, 2009

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
JANUARY 26, 2009

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to review
2 the Commonwealth's program of providing grants for
3 environmental protection and improvement projects under the
4 Growing Greener Program and the Community Conservation
5 Partnerships Program.

6 WHEREAS, Open space, greenways, recreational trails, river
7 corridors, fish and wildlife habitats, park and recreation areas
8 protect the environment, conserve natural resources and add
9 value to this Commonwealth and its communities; and

10 WHEREAS, The Commonwealth owns approximately 2.4 million
11 acres of State park and forest lands which provide recreational,
12 economic and educational opportunities for Commonwealth
13 residents; and

14 WHEREAS, Pennsylvanians have embraced the need for funding
15 dedicated to the improvement of our environment, the
16 preservation of our farmland and open spaces and the reduction
17 in the number of abandoned mines and hazardous sites; and

1 WHEREAS, Succeeding governors, over the last several years,
2 have attempted to ensure that adequate funding exists to achieve
3 these goals; and

4 WHEREAS, The General Assembly has expressed a willingness to
5 achieve the goals set forth by these governors to ensure that
6 future generations of Pennsylvanians are able to enjoy the
7 beauty and splendor of Penn's Woods; and

8 WHEREAS, This willingness has been signified by the passage
9 and subsequent enactment of one of the first State laws creating
10 mandatory recycling, preserving farmland and open space,
11 improving water quality and addressing the hazards of abandoned
12 mines; and

13 WHEREAS, This commitment reached a zenith with the enactment
14 of the Growing Greener initiative in 1999, 27 Pa.C.S. Ch. 61
15 (relating to environmental stewardship and watershed
16 protection), which now provides a dedicated funding source for
17 environmental improvement, farmland and open space preservation,
18 abandoned mine cleanup and the Community Conservation
19 Partnerships Program; and

20 WHEREAS, The General Assembly reaffirmed this commitment to
21 environmental stewardship by authorizing the Growing Greener II
22 initiative in 2005, which provided \$650 million in additional
23 funding for watershed improvements, farmland and open space
24 preservation, acid mine drainage mitigation and State park and
25 forest infrastructure improvements; and

26 WHEREAS, The Growing Greener initiative's goals are laudable
27 and important for the future protection and enhancement of this
28 Commonwealth's environment and it provides a number of
29 organizations with significant amounts of financial assistance,
30 but the program is complex, involves a range of projects from

1 simple purchases to highly technical design efforts; and
2 WHEREAS, The General Assembly has an obligation to the
3 citizens of this Commonwealth to ensure that this investment is
4 allocated wisely and achieves the results envisioned for the
5 program; and

6 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives has an interest in
7 ensuring the program is administered in accordance with the
8 goals and intent of the program and has an interest in
9 determining the costs and benefits associated with this
10 investment in the environment and specifically with the
11 investment made with the establishment of the Growing Greener II
12 initiative; therefore be it

13 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
14 undertake a comprehensive review of the environmental programs
15 contained in 27 Pa.C.S. §§ 6115, 6116, 6117, 6118 and 6119,
16 referred to as the Growing Greener II initiative, and prepare a
17 report of its findings which shall, at a minimum, identify all
18 of the following:

19 (1) the overall amount of bond funding authorized, the
20 amount issued, the amount remaining to be issued and a
21 schedule of debt service on the bond issuance;

22 (2) the total amount of funds allocated to each agency,
23 a compilation of how the allocated funds were spent and the
24 amount of remaining funds to be allocated by the agency;

25 (3) a determination of the costs and benefits of the
26 program, including a compilation of the miles of stream
27 buffers restored, the total acres of wetlands restored, the
28 total acres of abandoned mine lands reclaimed, the total
29 number of abandoned oil and gas wells plugged, the total
30 miles of acid mine drainage-impaired streams improved, the

1 total acres of open space and farmland preserved, the number
2 and type of infrastructure improvements made to the State
3 park and forest system and the number and type of energy and
4 brownfield remediation projects;

5 (4) a review of the projects completed under the County
6 Environmental Initiative Program, including the number and
7 type of projects by county, the amount of funding requested
8 and provided to each county and an evaluation of the costs
9 and benefits of the projects implemented under the program;
10 and

11 (5) a review and evaluation of the projects completed by
12 the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the
13 Pennsylvania Game Commission, including a list of the number
14 and types of projects completed and the costs and benefits
15 associated with the projects implemented by each agency;
16 and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That the committee make a thorough study of various
18 proposals for continued funding for environmental initiatives to
19 address watershed improvements, preservation of farmland and
20 open space, reduction in the number of unremediated abandoned
21 mine lands, for decreasing the number of streams impaired by
22 acid mine drainage, for improving the infrastructure of the
23 State park and forest system and for the Community Conservation
24 Partnerships Program; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the committee make a report of its findings,
26 including recommendations for legislation, to the House of
27 Representatives within one year of the adoption of this
28 resolution.