



Chair Freeman and members of the House Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on HB 782.

My name is Steve Hvozdovich and I'm the Pennsylvania Campaigns Director for Clean Water Action. We're a national non-profit environmental organization with roughly 80,000 members across Pennsylvania. Since our founding during the campaign to pass the landmark Clean Water Act in 1972, Clean Water Action has worked to win strong health and environmental protections by bringing issue expertise, solution-oriented thinking and people power to the table.

Development has a way of transforming our communities. These transformations however, are not always for the better. In certain circumstances, development can lead to adverse environmental conditions that actually end up putting our communities at risk from air pollution that can cause or exacerbate respiratory problems, like asthma as well as generate stormwater runoff that could overwhelm outdated sewer systems, transport pollutants to downstream waterways and lead to flooding.

The best way for our communities to gain the greatest benefits from development is to embark on public-private partnerships that ensures residents' and local leaders' voices and visions for their neighborhoods are heard and factored into developers' planning; that projects', especially mega-developments', potential impacts are clearly conveyed to and understood by residents and local leaders and that residents and local leaders have the opportunity based on transparent project details to take proactive steps that'll mitigate any adverse effects.

Urban areas tend to already have lots of hard surfaces, such as roofs, roads, parking lots, etc. that don't allow water from rain, snow, and ice to soak into the ground naturally. So, runoff takes place- collecting pollutants and litter on its way down the drain and lead to conditions that overwhelm our outdated sewer systems that result in direct overflows into our rivers and streams. In the case of heavier flow situations, it could also result in flooding. Development plans, especially for mega-developments can increase the amount of impervious surface areas, exacerbating stormwater runoff issues. In rural areas, development could alter green and forested landscapes by introducing impervious surface areas- creating stormwater runoff issues in areas where none may have previously existed.

Incorporating Green Stormwater Infrastructure or GSI into planning from the start is an effective approach to managing stormwater runoff through ways that mimic the natural environment as much as possible, including using plants, soil, and stone to filter and manage stormwater more effectively, reducing how much enters our sewer systems, and protecting our rivers and streams. Including these types of provisions into development plans can also add ascetic value to a project and our communities.

The City of Pittsburgh took such an approach in 2010 when it passed an ordinance that requires zero discharge and submittal of a Stormwater Plan for development sites that entail more than 10,000 square feet of land disturbance or add 5,000 square feet of impervious surface as well as any Pittsburgh development that receives public funding of \$1,000,000.

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When we think of threats to our air quality, our attention often falls upon completed industrial facilities that operate as major sources under a Title V permit. Yet development can also be responsible for significant emissions of particulate matter (PM), nitrogen oxides (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and black carbon particles which come from construction machinery and generators as well as vehicle traffic that run on diesel.

Emerging literature has shown that black carbon particles from diesel exhaust are also having a detrimental impact on climate change. This is a piece that is somewhat missed from the conversation about climate change causing agents because much of the focus is often on greenhouse gases. However, a recent in-depth review of black carbon states, "Mitigation of diesel-engine sources appears to offer the most confidence in reducing near-term climate forcing" (Bond et. al., 2013). This is because, unlike carbon dioxide and methane, black carbon has a short lifespan in the atmosphere averaging around 2-6 weeks. For comparison, carbon Dioxide can take about 70-100 years to leave the atmosphere and methane stays for about 10 years. This short residence time suggests that reducing black carbon emissions today would likely have quicker impacts which make it a rising strategy for combating climate change.

Allegheny County took steps to address these types of threats by passing a clean construction ordinance in 2020 that requires all county government construction projects that cost \$2.5 million or more to use ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. Under the legislation, all on-road vehicles (think dump trucks), as well as off-road equipment (like backhoes and bulldozers) involved in the projects were also required to use best available control technology, such as a diesel particulate filter.

We can grow and improve our communities through smart and responsible development that also preserves and protects our environment. HB 782 is a vehicle towards that end. It gives municipalities all across Pennsylvania, especially our smaller ones with part time governments the tools they need to better understand the impact a development project will have on their community as well as the chance to enact similar policies to the ones I previously mentioned which will better protect the quality of life, health, and environment of the people they were elected to represent from the type of intrusive land developments outlined in the bill.

This why Clean Water Action and our 80,000 members across the Commonwealth support HB 782 and encourage members of the House Local Government Committee to vote in favor of it if it's brought up for a vote.

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