
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 883 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY HARPER, ARGALL, CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER, GEORGE,
GODSHALL, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, KENNEY, MAJOR, PETRI, RAPP,
SAYLOR, SONNEY, STERN, WATSON, WOJNAROSKI AND MOYER,
SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY,
SEPTEMBER 18, 2008

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.

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

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

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

17 WHEREAS, Succeeding governors, over the last several years,

1 have attempted to ensure that adequate funding exists to achieve
2 these goals; and

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

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

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

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

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

30 WHEREAS, The General Assembly has an obligation to the

1 citizens of this Commonwealth to ensure that this investment is
2 allocated wisely and achieves the results envisioned for the
3 program; and

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

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

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

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

23 (3) a determination of the costs and benefits of the
24 program, including a compilation of the miles of stream
25 buffers restored, the total acres of wetlands restored, the
26 total acres of abandoned mine lands reclaimed, the total
27 number of abandoned oil and gas wells plugged, the total
28 miles of acid mine drainage-impaired streams improved, the
29 total acres of open space and farmland preserved, the number
30 and type of infrastructure improvements made to the State

1 park and forest system and the number and type of energy and
2 brownfield remediation projects;

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

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

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

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