

JOHN M. FERZEL
MAJORITY LEADER



110 MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
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REVIEW COMMISSION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Bureau of Forestry
Div. of State Forest Mgt.

November 3, 1997

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John C. Oliver, Secretary
Conservation and Natural Resources
Rachel Carson State Office Building
P.O. Box 8767
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8767

Dear Secretary Oliver:

I am writing to inform you that I have several concerns with the new proposed regulations for state forest lands. These new regulations were unveiled to the press by the department on September 17, 1997.

My first concern is with Sections 21.6 and 21.7 which prohibit horses and bicycles on the 18 state forest hiking trails and the national forest hiking trails unless posted as "open" for this use. I am told that the department has taken the position that horses and bicycles have the capability to cause severe damage to the trails or the fragile ecosystems. I believe that a wholesale closing of trails to two user groups is unfair.

Secondly, Section 21.6 would require that a camping permit be acquired by all campers on state forest land. This requirement would substantially interfere with camping on state forest land. At this time, some District Foresters require a permit for designated areas. If a camping permit is required, it is secured at the District Forester's office during normal business hours. This is impractical for many people in certain circumstances. For example, an individual who works during the week may be unable to secure a camping permit. Furthermore, if on a Saturday or Sunday a family decides to camp in a state forest, there is no way of obtaining a permit. In my opinion, there is no reason to obtain a permit unless it is an overused area or a fragile area. I would suggest that if the department wants to require permits, then it should establish a 24 hour, toll free telephone line so that people can easily obtain a camping permit.

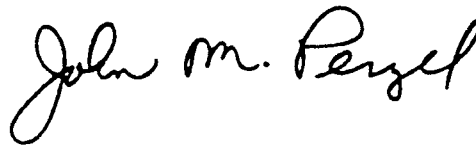
Thirdly, Section 21.7 prohibits snow plowing on state forest roads unless a District Forester grants permission. In many areas of Pennsylvania, there are privately-owned cabins located on state forest land. In addition, there are many privately-owned cabins on private lands in which access can only be gained through state forest roads. Under

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the proposed regulation, a District Forester could prohibit snow plowing and thereby deny individuals access to their property.

Thank you for any cooperation you may lend in addressing my concerns. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Perzel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John M. Perzel
Majority Leader

JMP/lal

✓ cc: Warren Ely
Division of State Forest Management