



PENNSYLVANIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

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AGRICULTURAL SECRETARY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Raymond C. Pickering
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Farmland Protection
2301 North Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408

Original: 2141

Dear Mr. Pickering:

This letter is in response to Act 156 of 1998, "Clean and Green", and the recent publication of the Department's regulations in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin*. Act 156 amends the Farmland and Forest Land Assessment Act of 1974 to set aside the interest penalty on rollback taxes, which is the amount equal to the difference between the taxes paid on the basis of the valuation and the taxes that would have been paid had that land not been valued or assessed. This applies to the land taken out of Clean and Green that pertains to farmland preservation.

There are 1,457 townships of the Second Class in Pennsylvania, many of which contain vast amounts of farmland and land devoted to various agricultural products. This Act has the potential to dramatically reduce the revenue stream to counties, school districts and townships. In the summary section of the *Bulletin*, Agricultural Secretary Hayes clearly points out the increase in costs and loss of revenue that will confront the counties. However, there is no mention of the impact on school districts and townships.

In April of 2000, during our annual state convention, our members adopted a resolution that called for "... a delay in implementation of Act 156 of 1998, and further, to require an examination of Act 156 of 1998 to determine the financial effects of the act on municipalities and make the necessary changes to relieve any financial strain inflicted upon them." The growing fear among townships is the potential loss of revenue from land that would qualify for the exemption under Act 156, but will never be used for agricultural purposes.

If you have any questions, or wish to discuss these comments further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Elam M. Herr
Director of Legislation

EMH:ls

cc: Representative Kerry Benninghoff
John H. Jewett, IRRC

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