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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

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2783

June 4, 2010

Mr. Kim Kaufman
Executive Director
PA Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Docket #2783, the Chapter 102 Regulations

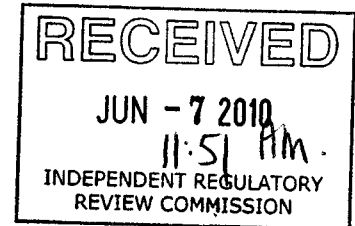
Dear Mr. Kaufman,

I am writing in strong support of the PA Department of Environmental Protection's proposed regulation requiring a 150-foot buffer zone on the commonwealth's best streams.

As an environmentalist and a former stream study educator, I am familiar with the positive impact of buffer zones on our waterways and ecosystems. As a former West Chester Borough Council member and current State Representative, I know the economic benefits of buffer zones as well. With tourism and water-related recreational activities a large part of our state's economy, we must do all we can to protect the health of our natural resources.

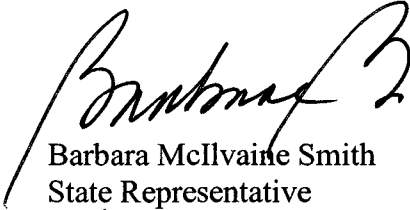
In my legislative district we have several areas where development has encroached upon our streams and wetlands thereby creating regular flood zones. I have watched stormwater, loaded with topsoil, washing over and around silt fencing installed by a builder during construction. That water flowed down one of the storm drains at the end of my street in the Borough of West Chester. For these reasons, I know first-hand how costly these areas are to repair and maintain. That kind of mess also poses a serious public safety hazard. Mandating a 150-foot buffer zone would help protect our streambanks and exceptional value streams from non-point source pollution.

Earlier this year the House Majority Policy Committee held a public hearing on the issue of buffer zones. At this hearing, testimony was offered by premier water scientist Bernard Sweeney, Ph.D, of Stroud Water Research, Grant Gulibon of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and Marel Roub of the PA Builders Association. It was clear at the conclusion of this hearing that buffer zones are highly beneficial and that the only issue in dispute at this time is the size of the zone.



Creating a 150-foot buffer zone is vital to the protection of our highest value streams and to our quality of life. Therefore, I urge you to vote in favor of DEP's proposed regulations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara McIlvaine Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "B".

Barbara McIlvaine Smith
State Representative
156th District

BMS:cds