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June 11, 2010

Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Re: Chapter 102, Erosion and Sedimentation Control. IRRC #2783. EQB 7-440.

Dear Independent Regulatory Review Commission:

I write today to encourage the IRRC to approve EQB's recent revisions to its rules for Erosion and Sedimentation Controls, including its rule, particularly the section mandating 150 foot buffers for new development along Exceptional Value and High Quality streams.

The benefits of stream buffers have been well-documented. Not only is there a widespread consensus of their value in the scientific community, but Pennsylvania's conservation community has also shown a broad and deep support for these rules.


As Pennsylvania adds more and more people, the pressure on our natural water supply becomes ever greater. Development puts pressure on communities' ability to handle increasing volumes of stormwater. It also puts more and more nutrients and other contaminants into the drinking water supply for the majority of people on public water in our state. As ratepayers, we all pay more and more to clean out pollution that could have been prevented from entering our water supply in the first place by leaving in place the naturally occurring forested buffers that exist alongside any stream in our Commonwealth.

Forested vegetation does an excellent job of slowing the velocity of stormwater, preventing erosion and filtering out contaminants. It does not cost us anything to leave this helpful system in place. To restore a buffer in a place where the trees have been removed, one need only take no action and the buffer will return in time.

Perhaps most importantly, for people who choose to live near our waterways, buffers protect property values. They do so by diminishing the likelihood of property damaging flood events, enhancing the scenic beauty, ensuring a recreational value in the waterway and maintaining a cool stream temperature.

Please approve these regulations and allow them to be promulgated by the DEP without delay.

Sincerely,


Tom Houghton
13th Legislative District



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

#2783
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