

ROBERT L. FREEMAN
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

November 16, 2009

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Environmental Quality Board
P. O. Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Dear Environmental Quality Board Members:

I am writing in support of the proposal to require a minimum of 100 foot forested buffers on each side of all streams in Pennsylvania and the continuation of the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) technical review process of stormwater plans.

As you know, Pennsylvania already has several voluntary programs to promote buffers. Although helpful, they have not been successful in making significant improvements in water quality and flood control. Pennsylvania's streams cannot afford more pollution and runoff, and we cannot afford increased flooding and drinking water treatment costs. Establishing riparian buffers along our Commonwealth's waterways is critical in protecting the quality and availability of our water across Pennsylvania, enhancing our environment, and mitigating the potential for destructive flooding. Buffers reduce the costs of storm water management, saving communities money on storm water infrastructure, as well as enhancing property values in our communities.

It is also important that DEP continues to review stormwater plans to insure that they meet the standards of the Clean Water Act and do not degrade the quality of the streams of the Commonwealth. An expedited permit review process, like the new "permit-by-rule" (PBR) program, puts rivers and streams at risk and violates core requirements of the Clean Water Act. One particular concern is that the PBR would apply in High Quality and Impaired watersheds. These watersheds require special protections to ensure that water quality is protected and maintained. Those special protections cannot be ensured through an expedited permit review process.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you direct DEP to include requirements for forested buffers of 100 feet on each side of all streams, 150 feet on headwater streams and 300 feet on Exceptional Value and High Quality streams. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Freeman".

Robert L. Freeman
State Representative
136th Legislative District

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
COMMISSION
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RLF/blm