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November 18, 2009

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Thomas L. Lewis
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PO Box 448
Milroy, PA 17063-8699

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

To whom it may concern:

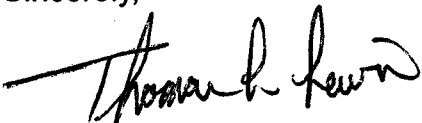
I am writing today to respectfully request that you make minimum 100-foot forested stream buffers a mandatory requirement on all streams in Pennsylvania. Such a mandatory, enforceable operating procedure is necessary to protect and maintain aquatic ecosystems and water quality both during and subsequent to earth disturbance activities such as oil and gas drilling, road construction, and timber harvesting--activities which have the greatest potential to cause stream degradation and pollution.

Please consider requiring forested buffers of at least 100 feet on both sides of every stream in our state, with 150 feet on small headwater streams and 300 feet on Exceptional Value and High Quality streams. Forested buffers provide positive benefits to the environment and the economy. Buffers have been shown to prevent or significantly reduce stream pollution, limit erosion of stream banks, improve habitat for fish, and maintain cold water temperatures. They will also increase property values for nearby properties, and cut stormwater management costs and drinking water treatment costs. And they will reduce damage from flooding, which costs at least \$6 billion a year. Many municipalities in PA already require at least 100-foot buffers, further demonstrating that environmental improvements can be achieved without economic burdens.

Please ensure the safety and quality of our streams and drinking water in Pennsylvania by creating a minimum 100-foot forested buffer for all of Pennsylvania's streams.

Thank you for your consideration in this very important matter.

Sincerely,



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COMMISSION