

The Pennsylvania Bluestone Association, Inc.
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September 27, 2010

Environmental Quality Board
PO Box 8477
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

Re: Noncoal Mining Fees, Via: Email

Dear Environmental Quality Board:

We have received the DEP's newest proposal to impose and increase rates for bluestone quarrying (noncoal permits). The Pennsylvania Bluestone Association represents approximately 1,500 to 1,800 quarries throughout northeast Pennsylvania and believe if the state of Pennsylvania keeps raising fees you will put many of these operations out of business since many of them are 2 or 3 men operations.

We enjoyed bonding fees for years at \$1,000 dollars per acre and the DEP has increased those rates to \$2,500 to \$4,000 per acre. Most of us understood that you cannot reclaim the quarry for \$1,000 dollars per acre. Now, most recently, you are once again adding an annual permit charge and permit fee.

I have always thought we wanted to create more jobs instead of discouraging people from going into this industry. The charge for blasting and transfers of permits makes sense, the rest is not justifiable.

The Pennsylvania Bluestone Association can not support increases that will put people out of work especially when the increases are not warranted when we most recently accepted new bonding increases. I would hope the state of Pennsylvania, along with the DEP, will re-evaluate these increases and ask us again for our input before signing into law.

We, as an association, have met with the DEP numerous times in the past discussing issues and concerns and looking to help raise money for our poor state. We were not included in this proposal part of the fees, only the tail end.

I would like the DEP to look at this fee schedule before finalizing since this will put more quarries out of business and also discourage more people from coming into the business. We also encourage an open dialogue with the DEP on any future changes. We thought we were an important industry for the state, please treat us as such. This industry feeds thousands of families.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

William M. Ruark
President
The Pennsylvania Bluestone Association, Inc.