

THE PENNSYLVANIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

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Mark Ott, President
The Pennsylvania Forestry Association
300 N 2nd Street, Suite 1002
Harrisburg, PA 17101

June 14, 2021

Karen Molchanow, Executive Director
Pennsylvania State Board of Education
333 Market Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Ms. Molchanow and Members of the State Board of Education:

Thank you for your continued work and investment of time and resources to ensure that students across Pennsylvania are taught valuable content. Your work is a key part of the education system in our commonwealth and every Pennsylvanian relies on your work. Again, thank you.

As the nation's oldest state-based forestry organization, the founders of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association saw a much different version of Pennsylvania. Joseph Rothrock, the "Father of Forestry" in Pennsylvania was the first forestry commissioner, selected in 1895, and led the first Division of Forestry which was initially housed at the PA Department of Agriculture. In regard to his work, Rothrock started a conversation about conservation that opened the door for other great pioneers, such as Jacob Bolde, Maurice Goddard, Gifford Pinchot, and Mira Lloyd Dock. Inspired by a depleted resources leading to a nearly unlivable Harrisburg, Dock is credited with starting the "City Beautiful" movement which led to a major process of city beautification in our capitol city.

While the history of conservation runs deep in the Commonwealth, the role that our schools play in engaging all Pennsylvanians in a better understanding of the natural world around us has led to the continued improvement of Pennsylvania's resources. Our members and leadership are concerned about the proposed changes to the Integrated Standards for Science, Environment and Ecology at the secondary level and the potential negative impacts it will have on the future of our state. We, like many of our fellow conservation groups implore the State Board of Education to consider ways to solidify the valuable standards of Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture into the state curriculum.

Our organization believes that all living things connect. The quality of our water, the cleanliness of our air, the diversity of our wildlife and forests depend on sound management. While working together, we can ensure a sustainable future for our commonwealth's limited resources. Our organizations founders saw the impacts of quick devastation and depletion, and the generations it has taken to build back William Penn's woods. Again, we ask you to strengthen the role of the Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture standards in PA.

We are here to be a resource. Our membership includes educators (both formal and informal), loggers, foresters, academics, landowners, and everyone that the forest touches. Please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Ott', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Ott
President