



Pennsylvania Council
Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 5148
Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.patROUT.org

June 29, 2021



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

RE: Comments on the proposed Pennsylvania Science, Technology, and Environment and Ecology standards

Dear Ms. Molchanow:

Thank you for supporting the process of revising the Pennsylvania Science, Technology, and Environment and Ecology standards. Based on the public information shared on the PA Department of Education website, PATU has concerns about the proposed Integrated Standards for Science, Environment and Ecology at the secondary level (grades 6-12) and how it will impact current and future students in our state.

The new proposed standards do not explicitly include Environment, Ecology and Agriculture as performance expectations. These were previously independent state standards that teachers were required to cover. The proposed integrated standards for grades 6-12 must include Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture as a separate, fifth domain. Furthermore, watershed and wetlands, agriculture and society, and integrated pest management should be addressed through individual performance expectations.

We need to ensure that these standards are included in the secondary level. The Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Program has been used by many teachers as an integral supplemental part of their curriculum when dealing with watersheds, human impacts on the environment, climate change resiliency, and environment and ecology (life cycles of trout). This program is utilized both at the elementary and high school level. If these subjects are not included in the revised standards, this could be a problem for our TIC teachers who rely on ties to science, environment, and ecology standards and curriculum to justify having TIC tanks in their classrooms. If they can no longer tie TIC to these standards, they may lose the ability to provide this important program to their students. This would be a big loss for the students, but also for our efforts to foster greater coldwater conservation and stewardship across the Commonwealth. The TIC Program encourages our youth to get outdoors and into nature by teaching them about our state fish, the native brook trout, as well as rainbow trout and other coldwater species. We need the Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture standards as a fifth domain because of the interconnectedness of them to the life cycles of our coldwater fishery resources across Pennsylvania.

These three topics are critical to ensure that Pennsylvania students are informed citizens and are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century economy. The new standards may be in place for several years, thus leaving these critical topics out of student's education will result in a deficit of valuable learning.

Please ensure Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture standards are not lost. PATU implores you to create a fifth, separate domain for these three content topics, ensuring these vital subject areas are not neglected and that Pennsylvania students are set up for success.

Thank you for supporting meaningful learning for students across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Malaska", written in a cursive style.

Greg Malaska, President