



From: [Zach Lyons-Weiler](#)
To: [ED, State Board of Ed](#)
Subject: [External] Omission of Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture
Date: Thursday, July 1, 2021 3:56:55 PM

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To whom this may concern,

Hello. My name is Zach Lyons-Weiler, and I am a sophomore at the University of Pittsburgh pursuing a degree in Ecology and Evolution, with a certificate in German. Upon hearing the news that the Pennsylvania Science Standards are under review, and that there is an intention to omit the teaching of Environment, Ecology, and Agriculture from the secondary level of education in the Commonwealth, I decided to comment.

The decision to omit these subjects from the secondary level is a grave mistake and deep oversight on behalf of the Commonwealth. Educating our youth on these topics is especially pertinent at the present time, as our nation and the world grapples with the most challenging issue of our times: climate change. Climate change threatens our food supplies, the integrity of our ecosystems, and our infrastructure. If left unchecked, the damage left on the human and natural world will be unlike anything seen in the scope of human history. Paired with this issue is also the terrifying topic of the human-mediated Anthropocene extinction, which is producing rates of extinction not seen since the extinction of the non-avian dinosaurs, 66 million years ago. This is not just sensationalism-these are real threats that are supported by a multitude of studies, which I can send along in a later should you be interested.

In light of these existential threats, the decision to remove the teaching of these subjects in the secondary level denies young adults the opportunity to learn about the intricate nature of the biological world, and our place in it. It leaves room for ignorant politicians and corporate billionaires to fill the void left by this decision with agenda-motivated narratives and pseudoscience.

I, for one, would have never learned about the dire state of the Earth, nor the fascinating intricacies of the ecological world, if I was never introduced to these topics during secondary education.

I implore you and the rest of the government of the Commonwealth to rescind these decisions and continue to teach the topics of Ecology, Environment, and Agriculture, so that young adults like me can have an opportunity to learn about the true state of our world. As stated before, continuing on this path will be a grave mistake that will further impede our fight against climate change and mass extinction.

Regards,

Zachary Lyons-Weiler