

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 27 Issue 2

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

February 2025



The Conservation Pledge

I give my pledge as an

American to save and faithfully defend from waste, the natural resources of my country; the soil, the water, the air, the minerals, the plant life and the wildlife.

This is my Pledge!

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EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin Visits East Palestine, Ohio, with Vice President JD Vance to Mark Two-Year Anniversary of Train Derailment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin took his first official trip in his new role, to East Palestine, Ohio, with Vice President JD Vance, to mark the two-year anniversary of the train derailment.

“After the tragic train derailment left East Palestine, Ohio, ravaged with toxic chemicals, the local community needed strong leaders to fight for them. Then-Senator JD Vance was one of the first elected officials to do so, and President Trump was on the scene within 19 days.

East Palestine has a voice with President Trump and Vice President Vance in the White House. This administration will fight hard to make sure every American has access to clean air, land, and water. It was an honor to meet with local residents, and I leave

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Three priority disaster sites for the agency to survey recovery efforts: East Palestine (OH), Los Angeles (CA), and Western North Carolina.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin's first full week on the job included visits to three priority disaster sites for the agency

to survey recovery efforts: East Palestine (OH), Los Angeles (CA), and Western North Carolina.

On Monday, February 3, 2025, Administrator Zeldin [traveled with Vice President JD Vance](#) to East Palestine, Ohio, to mark

the two-year anniversary of the train derailment. EPA is working hand-in-hand with President Trump and Vice President Vance to ensure the Ohio residents whose lives were upended have the support they

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EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin Visits East Palestine, Ohio, with Vice President JD Vance to Mark Two-Year Anniversary of Train Derailment (continued)

this trip more motivated to this cause than ever before. I will make sure EPA continues to clean up East Palestine as quickly as possible,” said **EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin**.

Vance and Zeldin started their day at the site of the train derailment to survey the cleanup efforts. Afterwards, they participated in a meeting with local residents and community leaders to learn more about what can be done to complete this process in a timely fashion, which was followed by a press conference.

Since the derailment took place on February 3, 2023, 219,823 tons of contaminated soil have been removed, more than 115 million air quality data points have been collected, and 70 million gallons of impacted water have been managed. Restoration of the derailment site and adjacent support areas is now in its final stages.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

three priority disaster sites for the agency to survey recovery efforts: East Palestine (OH), Los Angeles (CA), and Western North Carolina. (continued)

need. EPA is working on a daily basis with state and local partners to make sure the soil cleanup is completed by its target date.

On Tuesday, February 4, 2025, Administrator Zeldin delivered his Welcome Address to employees at EPA Headquarters in Washington, DC. In addition to staff who attended in-person, there were a record number of virtual attendees, more than 10,000, the highest in agency history. After the speech, he spent more than an hour talking with employees to discuss their top priorities.

Following his welcome address, Administrator Zeldin met with staff at the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, Office of Research and Development, and Office of Mission Support.

On Thursday, February 6, 2025, the Administrator [was in Los Angeles](#), California, as EPA embarks on the largest wildfire cleanup in agency history. He visited EPA's Incident Command Center in Burbank, toured damaged homes and met with residents in Altadena impacted by the Eaton Fire, and surveyed damage in the Pacific Palisades.

The Administrator concluded his week [in Western North Carolina](#) to visit communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. He visited the Lake Lure Debris site and met with residents impacted by damage in Asheville. He then toured the North Fork Drinking Water Treatment Plant and Marshall Sewage Facility.

To view photos, please visit the [EPA newsroom](#).

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Lee M. Zeldin Sworn in as 17th EPA Administrator

Lee Zeldin was sworn in as the 17th Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Administrator Zeldin will work closely with the dedicated career officials at the agency to fulfill the agency's mission to protect human health and the environment.

"It is my honor to serve as the 17th Environmental Protection Agency Administrator. Under President Trump's leadership, we will take great strides to defend every American's access to clean air, clean water, and clean land. We will maintain and expand the gold standard of environmental stewardship and conservation that President Trump set forth in his first administration while also prioritizing economic prosperity. I look forward to working with the agency's talented staff and scientists to deliver results for the American people. It's time to get to work," said EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin.

Administrator Zeldin has dedicated his life to public service. He is currently in his 22nd year in the United States military, having deployed to Iraq in 2006 with the Army's Elite 82nd Airborne Division and continues to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve. He served in the New York State Senate from 2011-2014 and later represented New York's First Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives from 2015-2023.

During his eight years in Congress, Zeldin worked across party lines to preserve the Long Island Sound and Plum Island. He supported key legislation that became historic, bipartisan success stories like the Great American Outdoors Act and Save our Seas Act to clean up plastics from our oceans. He also led the fight for Sea Grant, combated per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water, voted for the Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act, and supported clean energy projects on Long Island.

At just 23, Lee became the youngest attorney in New York State at the time.

Born and raised in Suffolk County, New York, Lee and his wife Diana are proud parents to their twin daughters, Mikayla and Arianna.

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Sopurce: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin was confirmed by a bipartisan vote in the U.S. Senate and subsequently sworn in as the 17th EPA Administrator.

Administrator Zeldin is committed to maintaining and expanding the gold standard of environmental stewardship and conservation that President Trump set forth in his first administration while also prioritizing economic prosperity.

Here is what elected officials and stakeholders are saying:

Elected Officials

Senate Majority Whip John Barrasso: “Lee Zeldin represents a new era of clear rules and common sense. He will correct the course of the EPA. The Senate will quickly vote to confirm him.”

Senator John Boozman: “I was proud to help advance Lee Zeldin’s nomination to the Senate floor. I am confident he will balance environmental stewardship & the impact of regulations on Arkansas’s farmers and businesses.”

Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Shelley Moore Capito (WV): “I have been continually impressed by Congressman Zeldin’s character, and his dedication to our country through service in both the U.S. Army and Congress. I am confident he will perform the role of EPA administrator exceptionally well and be a central member of President Trump’s cabinet as they enact policies and solutions to the environment, infrastructure, and energy challenges of our time.”

Senator Kevin Cramer: “As far as I’m concerned, Lee Zeldin is exactly the leader America needs at the helm of the EPA...He’ll restore primacy of states...while overturning these backwards regulations that plague energy producers, farmers, ranchers, landowners, and innovators of all types. Like President Trump, he wants clean water and air but doesn’t think we should settle for federal mediocrity.”

Senator Ted Cruz: “I’m confident [Lee Zeldin] will reverse the disastrous climate policies of the Biden admin. Lee will fight for jobs & a limited-regulation approach that will safeguard BOTH our economy & our environment.”

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson: “My good friend Lee Zeldin will make an excellent EPA Administrator. Under President Trump’s leadership and with Lee at the helm of the EPA, we will unleash America’s energy dominance, revamp our auto industry, and roll back radical Green New Deal regulations.”

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

Congressional Western Caucus Chairman Doug LaMalfa (CA-01): “I would like to congratulate my friend Lee Zeldin on becoming the Administrator of the EPA. Under his leadership, private landowners, farmers, and the American economy as a whole will be protected from federal overreach.”

Senator Cynthia Lummis: “After four years of disastrous environmental policy, Lee Zeldin will restore commonsense and prosperity back out west. The Golden Age of America begins now!”

Stakeholders

Linda Bauer Darr, President and CEO, American Council of Engineering Companies: “On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC), the business association of the nation’s engineering industry, I am pleased to offer our strong support for the nomination of Lee Zeldin to serve as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).”

Phillip Bell, President, Steel Manufacturers of America: “The Steel Manufacturers Association believes that Congressman Lee Zeldin is an excellent choice to fight for manufacturing in America, and we offer our strong endorsement for his confirmation as EPA Administrator. Congressman Zeldin will work tirelessly to implement President Trump’s smart regulatory policy that aims to put America first.”

Neil Bradley, Executive Vice President, Chief Policy Officer and Head of Strategic Advocacy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce: “As the U.S. Senate Considers the nomination of Congressman Lee Zeldin to be Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), The U.S. Chamber of Commerce offers the following observations. As demonstrated during his confirmation hearing, Representative Zeldin is a highly qualified candidate whose leadership and vision will ensure the EPA continues to uphold its mission while fostering economic growth and job creation. We urge quick consideration by the full Senate of Mr. Zeldin’s nomination and look forward to working with him upon his confirmation.”

Heidi Brock, President and CEO, American Forest & Paper Association: “We believe Mr. Zeldin is eminently qualified for this important role and will execute President Trump’s regulatory agenda in a thoughtful, impactful manner. Our industry was able to work with Mr. Zeldin during his time in Congress and we believe he is a pragmatic individual who will be able to enact reasonable, evidence-based regulations that provide those important benefits we described above including protecting the environment without unintentionally causing more harm than good to U.S. manufacturers.”

Eric Byer, President and CEO, Alliance Chemical Distribution, Chris Jahn, President and CEO, American Chemistry Council: “American Chemistry Council and Alliance for Chemical Distribution describes Congressman Zeldin as a ‘thoughtful leader who understood you

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

can protect the environment and human health without imposing unreasonable and unnecessary regulations that hurt businesses and workers.”

Stephen Ciccone, Group Vice President of Government Affairs, Toyota Motor North America, Inc.: “With his record of bipartisanship and pragmatism, we believe Lee Zeldin’s confirmation as EPA Administrator would provide a balanced approach to environmental policy that doesn’t leave consumers behind. His leadership would help create an environment where Americans have access to affordable vehicles that meet their needs while advancing the goal of reducing vehicle emissions. We strongly urge you to support Mr. Zeldin’s confirmation.”

Tom Dobbins, CEO, the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies: “During his time in Congress Mr. Zeldin also took an active interest in issues affecting the water Sector. ... AMWA strongly believes that Lee Zeldin is the right person to lead EPA during this consequential time, and we look forward to working with him to promote policies that will ensure the United States continues to have the safest and most accessible drinking water in the world.”

Paul Granger, P.E. Legislative Committee Co-Chair, Long Island Water Conference: “As a major professional water supplier organization on Long Island New York, we are offering our strong support for fellow Long Islander and New Yorker Lee Zeldin, who has been nominated to be the Administrator of the EPA. The ever-increasing regulatory burdens that face water utilities today is very challenging which places significant pressure on resources related to finances, staffing, and compliance. This continues to drive up concerns on water affordability and rate stability. Based on Mr. Zeldin’s record as a past state senator and congressman, we firmly believe that his philosophy and approach to regulations and commonsense policy align with you, and he is most qualified to lead the EPA. We believe that Mr. Zeldin’s experience will provide a balanced approach to the regulatory process. This will ultimately provide effective protection of public health and the environment.”

Heather Higgins, CEO, Independent Women’s Voice: “Independent Women, which advances policies that enhance opportunity and well-being, fully supports the confirmation of Lee Zeldin to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. President Trump deserves the team he wants so that he can carry out the directive given to him by the American people.”

Michael Hoffman, President and CEO, National Waste & Recycling Association: “As the representative of the New York’s 1st Congressional district and New York State’s 1st Senate District, Lee Zeldin top priority was the interests of his constituents. He continuously sought a balance between economic development and advocating on behalf of New York’s

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

environment. As a lifelong Long Islander, Mr. Zeldin successfully fought in the State Senate and Congress for coastal resilience and nature preservation projects and repeatedly looked for bipartisan compromise on environmental issues. For these reasons, the New York State Chapter of the National Waste & Recycling Association supports Lee M. Zeldin's nomination and looks forward to his strong leadership as the 48th Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency."

Matthew Holmes, CEO, National Rural Water Association: "On behalf of the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) and the more than 31,000 small and rural water and wastewater systems we represent, I'm writing to express our strong support for the nomination of former Representative Lee Zeldin of New York as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)."

Christine Keck, Vice President of National Government and Regulatory Affairs, American Water: "Given Rep. Zeldin's understanding of the vital role safe, clean, and reliable water plays in public health, national security and economic prosperity, American Water is hopeful he will help to champion the investments necessary to strengthen the nation's water systems. We stand ready to partner with the incoming administration, bringing our industry leading expertise, innovation, and resources to strengthen and modernize America's water systems, protect national security, public health and ensure affordability for all."

Adam Krantz, CEO, National Association of Clean Water Agencies: "On behalf of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), I am writing to offer support for the nomination of Lee Zeldin to serve as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)."

Ethan Lane, Vice President of Government Affairs, National Cattlemen's Beef Association: "For too long, the EPA has stood for 'Ending Production Agriculture.' Under Administrator Zeldin, we look forward to an EPA that acknowledges the conservation efforts that are only made possible by cattle farmers and ranchers—America's original conservationists. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association congratulates Administrator Zeldin on his bipartisan confirmation, and we look forward to working with him to protect the clean water and healthy soil that American agriculture relies on every day."

David Long, CEO, National Electrical Contractors Association: "Lee Zeldin's extensive leadership experience and commitment to balancing environmental stewardship with economic growth make him exceptionally well-suited to lead the EPA at this critical time. His understanding of the challenges faced by industries like ours, coupled with his collaborative approach to policymaking, gives me full confidence in his ability to effectively lead the EPA in achieving its mission."

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

Jim Matheson, CEO, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association: “NRECA is proud to support Lee Zeldin’s nomination as EPA Administrator...and looks forward to working with him to advance U.S. energy security and reliability.”

J. Clark Mika, President, Institute of Makers of Explosives: “On behalf of the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), I write in support of confirming Mr. Lee Zeldin to serve as the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mr. Zeldin’s experience in the New York State Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives makes him uniquely qualified to lead the EPA.”

Jackson Morrill, President and CEO, the American Wood Council: “The American Wood Council (AWC) supports Representative Lee Zeldin’s nomination to be the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)...His confirmation will enable the Agency to rapidly address several pending regulations and provide American manufacturing the certainty and stability needed to thrive.”

Rich Nolan, President and CEO, National Mining Association: “As President and CEO of the National Mining Association (NMA), I am writing to express NMA’s support for the nomination of the Honorable Lee Zeldin to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mr. Zeldin’s legislative record, leadership, and experience navigating environmental challenges make him well-prepared to lead the EPA.”

John O’Leary, President and CEO, Daimler Truck North America: “Mr. Zeldin has consistently shown the leadership and vision needed to address complex issues. His commitment to advancing sensible environmental policies and regulations makes him the right candidate to lead the EPA.”

Lisa Nelson, CEO, ALEC Action: “Zeldin’s tenure represents an opportunity to realign the EPA with its core mission: protecting public health and the environment, all while respecting economic realities. His proven track record and forward-thinking approach give us hope that his leadership will bring the EPA back on track to address immediate, pressing concerns. Lee Zeldin will prioritize faster-acting, market-based solutions that address the urgent environmental needs of today without compromising the prosperity of tomorrow. We are excited to work with him and his team throughout his tenure as EPA Administrator in the incoming Administration.”

Sean O’Neill, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs, Portland Cement Association: “The Portland Cement Association (PCA), which represents cement manufacturers across the country, expresses its support for the Senate’s expedient consideration and approval of the nomination of former Representative Lee Zeldin to serve as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).”

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

Robert F. Powelson, President and CEO, National Association of Water Companies:

“Lee Zeldin’s Congressional experience and commitment to balancing environmental stewardship with economic growth make him well-suited to lead the EPA in the new administration. His understanding of the challenges faced by the regulated, private water industry, along with his collaborative approach to policymaking, shows he has what it takes to effectively lead the EPA in achieving its mission.”

Corey Rosenbusch, President and CEO, The Fertilizer Institute: “I am writing you on behalf of The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) to offer my endorsement and full support for the nomination of The Honorable Lee M. Zeldin to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Throughout his career in public service, Mr. Zeldin has been committed to science-based environmental policy, recognizing that protecting our environment and enabling economic growth can and should be achieved together. This common-sense approach is one that the fertilizer industry, farmers, and all of agriculture follows daily, and we are confident that it will serve Mr. Zeldin and the nation well.”

Jeffrey D. Shoaf, CEO, Associated General Contractors of America: “The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) supports the nomination of Mr. Lee Zeldin as administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)...AGC chapters and members understand the importance of protecting our environment while advancing economic development.”

Jerry Simmons, President and CEO, Domestic Energy Producers’ Alliance: “The Domestic Energy Producers’ Alliance (DEPA) is proud to support the nomination of Lee Zeldin for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). We believe that Zeldin will carry out President elect Trump’s energy and environmental agenda, which includes pulling back Biden-era rules on climate and air pollution and potentially rescinding millions of dollars in funding for clean energy under the Inflation Reduction Act. Additionally, the incoming administration is expected to take a more aggressive stance in challenging California’s autonomy in enforcing environmental standards that are more stringent than those set by the federal government — many of which picked up as models for more than a dozen other states that has let to unnecessary and costly legal challenges.”

Emily Skor, CEO, Growth Energy: “Administrator Zeldin has made it clear that he understands how important American-made biofuels are to President Trump’s efforts to unleash American energy.”

Mike Sommers, President and CEO, American Petroleum Institute: “API supports the confirmation of Lee Zeldin as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.”

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

The EPA plays an integral role in ensuring Americans benefit from clear air, land, and water. We are confident in Mr. Zeldin's leadership to protect human health and our environment through sensible policies while also supporting American innovation and economic growth."

Chris Spear, President and CEO, American Trucking Association: "Congressman Zeldin listened to advocates on all sides of environmental issues and worked with his colleagues as part of the Climate Solutions Caucus and Conservative Climate Caucus on proactive, constructive and results-driven approaches to key issues. This dedication to collaboration is exactly what is needed from an EPA Administrator."

Cindy Squires, President and CEO, American Composite Manufacturers Association: "Congratulations on your confirmation by the United States Senate. We appreciate your statements...that protection of the environment is essential without suffocating the economy. We look forward to working with you and EPA in the coming years."

Michele Stanley, Interim CEO, National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association: "As the Committee on Environment and Public Works prepares to vote on the nomination of former Representative Lee Zeldin to serve, as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA) would like to express our unwavering support for his confirmation."

Dominique Stumpf, CEO, National Pest Management Association, and Rob Moloney, President, the New York Pest Management Association: "On behalf of the National Pest Management Association, the trade association representing the more than 18,000 U.S.-based pest control companies and nearly 200,000 front line service personnel, we would like to extend our congratulations on your successful confirmation. We look forward to working closely with the Agency, under your leadership, on solutions to continue to protect human health, food and our environment."

Megan Tanel, President, Association of Equipment Manufacturers: "The Association of Equipment Manufacturers supports the nomination of the Honorable Lee M. Zeldin to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)...Mr. Zeldin's proven leadership, pragmatic approach to policymaking, and dedication to common-sense environmental solutions make him well-qualified to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. His focus on balancing environmental protections with economic growth will serve him well in promoting innovation, streamlining regulatory processes, and supporting industries that are vital to the nation's economy and sustainability efforts."

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to Unleash American Greatness as Head of EPA (continued)

Chet Thompson, President and CEO, American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers: “Throughout his time in Congress, Administrator nominee Zeldin presented a balanced and practical approach to tackling key environmental issues while balancing the needs of energy development. His experience working across party lines makes him an ideal candidate to lead the EPA in a manner that fosters both collaboration and innovation. Administrator nominee Zeldin’s leadership would bring a fresh perspective to the agency, helping to strengthen the EPA’s role in tackling the complex environmental challenges we face.”

For further information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

Source: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Shapiro Administration Announces Over \$2.7 Million for Conservation Projects in Southwest Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that 13 projects in the state's Southwest region were awarded a total of \$2,749,569 through DEP's [Growing Greener Plus grant program](#). These projects work to protect waterways and watersheds, reclaim abandoned mine sites, and work to reclaim and plug abandoned oil and gas wells. This year's awards exceed \$15 million statewide.

"The Growing Greener Plus grant program empowers communities to pursue environmental progress and innovation," said Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "This support fuels vital Pennsylvania initiatives that protect our land and restore local watersheds. As a result, our Commonwealth can look forward to a greener future."

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address critical environmental concerns. Growing Greener grants can be awarded to watershed groups, local or county government, municipal authorities, county planning commissions, county conservation districts, council of governments, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations. Grantees have up to three years to implement their projects.

This funding is being distributed through existing Commonwealth grant programs to ensure high-impact projects are selected in the affected communities and that proper oversight is provided. Grant programs include those operated by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the DEP.

For more information on the [Growing Greener Plus grant program](#), application guidance, and to sign up for notifications when grant programs reopen, visit DEP's webpage, Growing Greener Plus Grants Program.

In August 2022, the Office of Attorney General (OAG) announced that Energy Transfer Marketing & Terminals, L.P. was convicted of criminal charges related to its conduct during construction of two major pipelines. As part of the settlement agreement, Energy Transfer has paid \$10 million toward dedicated projects that improve the quality of watersheds and streams along pipeline routes, including one project in Washington County and one in Westmoreland County.

"Every Pennsylvanian has the right to access clean water. Thanks to the work of the OAG in 2022, securing \$10 million in restitution to improve water quality, the Office of Attorney General is able to partner with DEP and the Growing Greener Program to fund projects along the route of the Mariner East Pipeline. These projects will go a long way in improving local watersheds along the pipeline, ensuring safe and clean water," said Attorney General Dave Sunday.

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Shapiro Administration Announces Over \$2.7 Million for Conservation Projects in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Growing Greener Projects in the Southwest Region funded by the settlement agreement include:

Washington County

Union Township Road District - \$166,740 for Union Township – Pleasant Stream Park Streambank Restoration

Westmoreland County

Rostraver Township - \$253,455 for Elks Place Stormwater Improvements

The full list of approved Growing Greener Plus projects, funded by the Environmental Stewardship fund, in the Southwest Region includes:

Allegheny County

Allegheny County Conservation District - \$58,000 for the Mamone BMP Implementation Project

Allegheny County Conservation District - \$50,000 for Plum Stormwater Project: Phase 1 Design/Permit

Beaver County

Beaver County Conservation District - \$439,679 for Brush Creek Ag BMP #2

Beaver County Conservation District - \$33,882 for Dilworth Run-North Fork Little Beaver Creek Streambank Stabilization Design and Construction

Cambria County

Cambria County Conservation District - \$222,938 for Bay Watershed Projects Phase II

Cambria County Conservation District - \$260,932 for Ohio River Watershed Projects Phase II

Fayette County

Mountain Watershed Association - \$415,614 for the Marsolino Treatment System

Somerset County

Somerset County Conservation A \$266,986 for the Laurel Hill Creek Fish Habitat Enhancement Project

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Shapiro Administration Announces Over \$2.7 Million for Conservation Projects in Southwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Washington County

Washington County Conservation District - \$121,705 for the 2024 Route 519 Stream Restoration Project

Statewide

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - \$267,638 for Technical Assistance Benefitting Conservation Partnerships and Pennsylvania's Water Quality Improvement Goals

Trout Unlimited Inc. - \$300,000 for the AMD Technical Assistance Program

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP Announces Winners of 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest, Encourages Pennsylvanians to Test for Radon During Radon Action Month

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced the winners of the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest and continues to encourage Pennsylvanians to test their homes for radon as part of the department's ongoing National Radon Action Month outreach.

First place in the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest went to Regan Schall, a seventh-grade student at North Hills Middle School, whose poster will be entered into a national student radon poster contest. Audrey Rau, a ninth-grade student at Monroe Career and Technical Institute, earned second place. And David Culp, a fourth-grade student at Pittston Area Intermediate Center, earned third place.

"We want to thank all the students who participated in this year's Student Radon Poster Contest," said DEP Radon Program Manager Bob Lewis. "We're pleased to include these winning posters as part of our radon educational outreach to Pennsylvanians in 2025."

Winners of the 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest are also helping DEP educate Pennsylvanians about the importance of testing their homes for the radioactive gas. Posters were judged by DEP staff on subject matter accuracy and other criteria.

Radon is an invisible, odorless, radioactive gas that enters homes from the ground as a result of the breakdown of uranium and radium in rocks and soil.

"Around 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have higher levels of radon gas than federal guidelines consider safe. However, every Pennsylvanian should take radon awareness seriously, as it poses significant potential health risks. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, second only to smoking," DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley said. "What makes radon particularly concerning is that you can't see it, smell it, or taste it. There are no symptoms to alert you to its presence in the home. That is why every Pennsylvanian should ensure their families are safe and test for radon."

Pennsylvania is particularly prone to elevated radon levels, and the only way homeowners can know for certain if they have a radon problem is to test their home. DEP recommends that all homes, public and private buildings get tested. The best time to test is during the colder months, when homes and buildings are closed and radon is most likely to be trapped and build up to higher levels.

Radon is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year in the U.S., according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and about 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have radon levels above the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter). While radon problems may be more common in some regions, there is potential for any home to have high radon levels.

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DEP Announces Winners of 2025 Pennsylvania Student Radon Poster Contest, Encourages Pennsylvanians to Test for Radon During Radon Action Month (continued)

Radon test kits are also available at many home improvement and hardware stores, as well as from Pennsylvania-certified radon laboratories. Radon test kits typically cost approximately \$20-\$30. Completed test kits are sent to a Pennsylvania-certified lab where the sample is analyzed, and the results are sent to the home or building owner. Homeowners are also able to hire a state-certified radon testing company to do the testing for them. The public is encouraged to call DEP's Radon Division at 717-783-3594, or the Radon Hotline at 800-237-2366, for help with interpretation of their test results and what follow-up action may be necessary.

Permanent radon mitigation systems typically cost between \$800 and \$1,200 and require minimal maintenance. A list of state-certified radon contractors, labs, and testers is available on DEP's website. The list is also available by calling 1-800-23-RADON.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Shapiro Administration Announces Over \$2.5 Million for Conservation Projects in Northwest Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that 12 projects in the state's Northwest Region were awarded a total of \$2.5 million through DEP's [Growing Greener Plus grant program](#). These projects work to protect waterways and watersheds, reclaim abandoned mine sites, and work to reclaim and plug abandoned oil and gas wells. This year's awards exceed \$15 million statewide.

"The Growing Greener Plus grant program empowers communities to pursue environmental progress and innovation," said Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "This support fuels vital Pennsylvania initiatives that protect our land and restore local watersheds. As a result, our Commonwealth can look forward to a greener future."

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address critical environmental concerns. Growing Greener grants can be awarded to watershed groups, local or county government, municipal authorities, county planning commissions, county conservation districts, council of governments, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations. Grantees have up to three years to implement their projects.

This funding is being distributed through existing Commonwealth grant programs to ensure high-impact projects are selected in the affected communities and that proper oversight is provided. Grant programs include those operated by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the DEP.

For more information on the Growing Greener Plus grant program, application guidance, and to sign up for notifications when grant programs reopen, visit DEP's webpage, [Growing Greener Plus Grants Program](#).

The full list of approved Growing Greener Plus projects, funded by the Environmental Stewardship fund, in the Northwest Region includes:

Butler County

Butler County Conservation District - \$349,167 for the Altman Heavy Use Area

Butler County Conservation District - \$358,320 for Bauldoff Farm

Elk County

Elk County Conservation District - \$87,002 for the Stream Improvement and Rain Garden Project-Upper Clarion River Watershed

Erie County

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Shapiro Administration Announces Over \$2.5 Million for Conservation Projects in Northwest Pennsylvania (continued)

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - \$175,832 for the East Branch Conneaut Creek Protection Project

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - \$375,453 for the South Branch French Creek Restoration Project

Indiana County

Indiana County Conservation District - \$114,600 for the Indiana County Agricultural BMP Design Project

Indiana County Conservation District - \$175,336 for Little Mahoning Streambank Stabilization Phase I

McKean County

McKean County Conservation District - \$263,259 for the McKean County Stream Crossing Restoration Initiative

Mercer County

Mercer County Conservation District - \$143,140 for the Neshannock Creek Fish Habitat Project

Venango County

Venango Conservation District - \$18,096 for the East Branch Sugar Creek Protection Project

Warren County

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy - \$250,000 for Brokenstraw Healthy Watershed Initiative Phase 4

Statewide

Northwest Pennsylvania Eminent Community Institute - \$200,000 for Management and Continuation of the NW PA Greenways Implementation Block Grants

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Shapiro Administration Announces More Than \$1.2 Million for Conservation Projects in Northeast and Lehigh Valley

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced that eight projects in the state's Northeast and Lehigh Valley Region were awarded a total of \$1,243,293 through DEP's [Growing Greener Plus grant program](#). These projects work to protect waterways and watersheds, reclaim abandoned mine sites, and work to reclaim and plug abandoned oil and gas wells. This year's awards exceed \$15 million statewide.

"The Growing Greener Plus grant program empowers communities to pursue environmental progress and innovation," said Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "This support fuels vital Pennsylvania initiatives that protect our land and restore local watersheds. As a result, our Commonwealth can look forward to a greener future."

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address critical environmental concerns. Growing Greener grants can be awarded to watershed groups, local or county government, municipal authorities, county planning commissions, county conservation districts, council of governments, educational institutions, or non-profit organizations. Grantees have up to three years to implement their projects.

This funding is being distributed through existing Commonwealth grant programs to ensure high-impact projects are selected in the affected communities and that proper oversight is provided. Grant programs include those operated by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the DEP.

For more information on the Growing Greener Plus grant program, application guidance, and to sign up for notifications when grant programs reopen, visit DEP's webpage, [Growing Greener Plus Grants Program](#).

The full list of approved Growing Greener Plus projects, funded by the Environmental Stewardship fund, in the Northeast and Lehigh Valley Region includes:

Carbon County

Carbon County Conservation District - \$142,000 for the Hunter Creek Restoration Project

Jim Thorpe Borough - \$150,000 for the Silk Mill Run Dam Removals and Stream Restoration

Lehigh County

Lehigh County Conservation District - \$127,250 for Lehigh County Stream Restoration Projects

Lehigh and Northampton Counties:

Wildlands Conservancy - \$163,517 for the Lehigh Valley Stream Restoration Project

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Shapiro Administration Announces More Than \$1.2 Million for Conservation Projects in Northeast and Lehigh Valley (continued)

Wildlands Conservancy - \$50,000 for Landowner Outreach and Project Development in the Lehigh Valley and Lehigh River Watershed Phase III

Schuylkill County:

Schuylkill Conservation District - \$74,151 for the Little Mahanoy Creek Headwaters Restoration Project

Schuylkill Conservation District - \$236,375 for Upper Mahantango Creek Agricultural BMP Projects

Statewide:

Pocono Northeast RC&D Council - \$300,000 for C-SAW Consortium for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)