

Conservation Committee Report

Volume 27 Issue 3

Jack Walters—Conservation Chairman

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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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Administrator Zeldin Announces that Billions of Dollars Worth of "Gold Bars" Have Been Located at Outside Financial Institution

Calls for Termination of Biden-Harris Financial Agent Agreement and Return of Entire Fund Balance to the U.S. Treasury

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin

announced the agency has found [billions of taxpayer dollars](#) parked at a financial institution by the Biden-Harris Administration. Administrator Zeldin is calling for termination of the financial agent agreement, and for the immediate return of the entire fund balance to the United

States Treasury to ensure EPA oversight. Administrator Zeldin also announced that he will be referring this matter to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Congress, and the agency will work with the U.S. Department of Justice.

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Delaware River Named Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year

This marks the third time the Delaware River has earned the title, having previously won in 2002 and 2011, and it will be celebrated with a River of the

Year Paddle in June.

The Delaware River has been named [Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year](#) after securing the most votes in a public competition, the **Department of Conservation and**

Natural Resources (DCNR) and the [Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers \(POWR\)](#) announced today.

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"The Delaware River is a conservation success story, and

Administrator Zeldin Announces that Billions of Dollars Worth of “Gold Bars” Have Been Located at Outside Financial Institution (continued)

“Roughly twenty billion of your tax dollars were parked at an outside financial institution by the Biden EPA. This scheme was the first of its kind in EPA history and it was purposefully designed to obligate all of the money in a rush job with reduced oversight,” **said Administrator Zeldin.**

“One of my very top priorities at EPA is to be an excellent steward of your hard-earned tax dollars. There will be zero tolerance of any waste and abuse,” **continued Administrator Zeldin.** “We will review every penny that has gone out the door. The days of irresponsibly shoveling boat loads of cash to far-left, activist groups in the name of environmental justice and climate equity are over.”

Two months ago, a video circulated on social media featuring a Biden EPA political appointee talking about “tossing gold bars off the titanic,” intentionally rushing to get billions of tax dollars recklessly out of the agency before Inauguration Day. During Administrator Zeldin’s confirmation hearing, he committed to ensuring he would work hard to research and account for every dollar spent at EPA, not only during his tenure, but also from the last administration.

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

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

Delaware River Named Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year (CONTINUED)

this designation is a testament to its historical, cultural, and recreational significance," said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. "From providing drinking water to millions to fueling economic growth and offering outdoor recreation, the Delaware River is a shining example of how communities can work together to protect and restore vital natural resources."

The Delaware River has played a pivotal role in American history, marking the site of Washington's famous crossing — the turning point of the Revolutionary War. It was crucial in driving the Industrial Revolution, and today, the Delaware River Port is the largest freshwater port in the world. More than 14 million people rely on the river for drinking water. Once heavily polluted, to the point where ship hulls darkened from the contamination, the river has since undergone a dramatic recovery and now boasts more National Wild and Scenic designations than any other river.

This marks the third time the Delaware River has earned the title, having previously won in 2002 and 2011. The public cast a total of 8,037 votes, with the Delaware River receiving 2,962, followed by the Youghiogheny River (2,784) and Perkiomen Creek (2,291). POWR, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, administers the annual vote in partnership with DCNR.

"The River of the Year program is an opportunity to highlight the beauty, history, and ongoing conservation efforts surrounding Pennsylvania's waterways," said **Janet Sweeney of POWR**. "The Delaware River stands out not only for its role in American history but also for its transformation into a model of ecological restoration and stewardship."

The river is home to the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, one of the top 20 most-visited national park areas in the country. Additionally, many of its tributaries are currently under study for national protection under the Wild & Scenic Rivers program.

To celebrate this recognition, a River of the Year Paddle will take place in June as part of a year-long series of events. The Upper Delaware Preservation Coalition, which nominated the Delaware River, will receive a \$15,000 Leadership Grant from DCNR and POWR to support these activities. A commemorative poster will also be created to mark the occasion.

"The Delaware River's designation as Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year underscores the power of partnerships in conserving and celebrating this incredible waterway," said **Mark Zakutansky of the Appalachian Mountain Club and Chair of the Delaware River Sojourn Steering Committee**. "As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Delaware River Sojourn in 2025, we invite everyone to experience its waters, learn about its history, and join the community dedicated to its preservation."

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Delaware River Named Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year (CONTINUED)

The **Shapiro Administration** remains committed to protecting Pennsylvania's natural resources, including clean water. Administered by DCNR, [Pennsylvania's Rivers Conservation Program](#) supports river restoration and protection efforts, scenic river designations, water trails, and community engagement initiatives like River of the Year.

For more details on Pennsylvania's River of the Year program and upcoming events, visit [DCNR's website](#) and check the [DCNR Calendar of Events](#).

Source: **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)**

DEP Provides Update on Lancaster Plane Crash Cleanup

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) continues to monitor the cleanup effort in the aftermath of Sunday's aircraft accident in Manheim Township, Lancaster County. Shortly after takeoff, a single engine aircraft crashed into a parking lot of the Brethren Village. The crash caused the plane and several cars to ignite and burn. One of the 12 vehicles involved was a hybrid A a lithium battery.

DEP sent an emergency response team to respond, and staff have been on site since yesterday to monitor fuel runoff. The plane had a maximum capacity of 120 gallons of Jet A fuel. Thirty gallons of fuel was recovered from one of the wings. While some of the fuel likely burned in the fire, an unknown amount discharged with the firefighting runoff to a nearby storm drain, traveled through stormwater pipes, and discharged into a stormwater basin. An environmental contractor is cleaning up the fuel in the stormwater system.

Firefighters estimated they used 2,000 gallons of water with non-PFAS foam. No surface waters were affected. The environmental contractor provided initial containment overnight to prevent any further fuel runoff. Once investigators clear the scene, the contractor will proceed with long-term cleanup efforts. DEP staff will continue to monitor and provide updates on the environmental cleanup.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP to Hold Public Hearing on Draft Discharge Permit for Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has published notice of a draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill. DEP is accepting comments on the draft discharge permit until April 3, 2025, and will hold a public hearing to receive testimony from the public.

The public hearing will take place on March 20, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM at Rostraver Central Fire Department Social Hall, 1100 Fells Church Road, Rostraver Township, PA 15012.

Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill currently hauls leachate and condensate by truck to a wastewater treatment plant and has applied for a permit to discharge treated leachate and condensate from its facility via pipeline to the Monongahela River. If this permit is approved, Westmoreland Sanitary Landfill would also need to apply for and receive a permit to construct and operate a wastewater treatment system and apply for and receive a permit amendment to modify its Leachate Management Plan. The draft NPDES permit and more information is available on the DEP's [community information webpage](#) for this facility.

Individuals who wish to provide comments at the hearing are asked to register in advance by contacting DEP's Southwest Environmental Justice Coordinator Emily Green at emgreen@pa.gov or 412-442-4042. Registration for the hearing will be accepted through 4:00 PM the day prior. Testimony will be limited to three minutes per commentor so that DEP can receive as many comments as possible. Time may not be relinquished or shared, and organizations are asked to designate one speaker on its behalf.

All comments, whether provided orally at a hearing or in writing, carry equal weight and consideration before DEP. All presenters should provide at least one copy of their written comments and exhibits for submission to the DEP either at the in-person hearing or via email to the email account below following the hearing.

DEP will accept written comments on the draft NPDES permit through close of business on April 3, 2025. Comments can be emailed to EPNPDES_SWRO@pa.gov or mailed to the DEP's Southwest Regional Office, C/O Clean Water Program, 400 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 and should contain the name, address, email, and telephone number of the person submitting the comments, identification of the draft NPDES [PA0285358], and a concise statement and the relevant facts upon which the comments are based.

Persons with a disability wishing to attend the hearing and requiring an auxiliary aid, service, or other accommodation to participate, should contact Emily Green at the number above or the Pennsylvania AT&T Relay Service at 1-800-654-5984 (TDD) to discuss how the Department may accommodate their needs.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Governor Shapiro's Budget Proposes 125th State Park

Governor Josh Shapiro this week outlined his 2025-26 budget proposal -- a commonsense plan that builds on two years of progress, continues to solve problems, and paves the way for a stronger, more competitive Pennsylvania.

During his budget remarks, Governor Shapiro said... "Pennsylvania is home to some of the most beautiful and remarkable places in the country and I want more people to experience them. This is a budget that looks to the future – whether it's supporting America250 or expanding access to our parks and trails – all of which are free. And as we look to the future, we need to invest in the key sectors that are going to fuel our growth."

The proposal includes \$664 million across all funding sources to allow the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to continue its operations, with \$5 million in new funding to build trails and expand state parks in Pennsylvania.

It outlines the transfer of the 391-acre Glen Onoko tract in Carbon County from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to Lehigh Gorge State Park. After a planning process and improvements, DCNR would reopen the Glen Onoko Falls Trail, increasing safe access to waterfalls and scenic views.

The Commonwealth also would acquire Laurel Caverns in Fayette County through a donation from the present owner, which will become the 125th state park. Future work would include infrastructure and safety improvements and a concession agreement to operate the public tour portion of the new park.

The General Assembly now works to pass a budget bill that will go to Governor Shapiro to sign. DCNR's House Appropriation hearing is February 27 at 10:00 AM.

Find more information about **Governor Shapiro's budget** on the Pennsylvania Office of the Budget website or visit www.shapirobudget.pa.gov.

Source: PA DCNR

Shapiro Administration Holds Energy Transfer Accountable for Contaminating Drinking Water with Pipeline Leak

DEP Orders Energy Transfer to Provide Bottled Water and Install Water Treatment Systems to Impacted Homes

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) [issued an order](#) to Energy Transfer to provide water to residents in Upper Makefield Township affected by a leak in Energy Transfer's 14-inch pipeline. Energy Transfer will be required to install point-of-entry-treatment systems to over 100 homes in the Mt. Eyre neighborhood and remediate the affected areas.

"Today's order will ensure that these residents have safe drinking water, the contamination is cleaned up, and the community has a direct line of contact with Energy Transfer to express their concerns," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "Clean, safe drinking water is one of the most important resources we have, whether that is from a public water supplier or a private water well. Pennsylvanians have a constitutional right to pure water and we will work to ensure that right is protected in Upper Makefield Township."

DEP already had insisted on water testing at impacted homes, and so far, under DEP oversight, a third-party contractor has taken 447 samples of well water for petroleum contamination. To date, treatment systems have been installed at 42 residences, six of which had results above drinking water standards for petroleum products, with detectable contamination at other residences. Energy Transfer has agreed to install at least 102 more treatment systems at the request of homeowners. The point-of-entry treatment filtration systems that have been installed are designed to remove all contaminants from drinking water.

DEP is conducting stream assessments and water chemistry sampling of three nearby streams: Dyers Creek, Houghs Creek and an unnamed tributary. DEP also is overseeing hydrology testing to characterize the subsurface affected area and better understand groundwater flow, which will help inform the longer-term remediation plan. More details can be found on DEP's community webpage for [Upper Makefield Pipeline](#).

In addition to requiring temporary relief such as bottled water, DEP's Order requires Energy Transfer to submit an enforceable schedule for completing its environmental investigations and submitting cleanup plans to address the impacts of the leak.

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Shapiro Administration Holds Energy Transfer Accountable for Contaminating Drinking Water with Pipeline Leak (continued)

Governor Josh Shapiro also [sent a letter](#) to the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), calling on federal leaders to hold Energy Transfer accountable under their authority. The federal government has primary jurisdiction related to operation of the pipeline itself under the Pipeline Safety Act.

As Attorney General, Governor Shapiro negotiated a settlement with Energy Transfer to resolve violations associated with the construction of the ME2 pipeline. As part of the settlement agreement, Energy Transfer was required to pay \$10 million toward dedicated projects that improve the quality of watersheds and streams along pipeline routes, [including projects in Southeastern Pennsylvania](#).

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Shapiro Administration Launches RISE PA Initiative to Create Energy Jobs, Cut Costs, Grow Pennsylvania's Energy & Manufacturing Industries, and Lower Toxic Air Pollution

RISE PA will create thousands of good-paying jobs in construction and manufacturing – the \$396 million program is for projects to reduce energy costs and air pollution from industrial facilities.

[Union labor, environmental advocates, and leaders from across the energy industry](#) have praised the Shapiro Administration's commonsense efforts to create jobs and tackle industrial pollution while helping build healthier communities and a stronger economy in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) opened the Reducing Industrial Sector Emissions in Pennsylvania (RISE PA) program today, accepting grant applications from companies that own industrial facilities, mines, and natural gas infrastructure for projects that will create up to 6,000 jobs and reduce air pollution in the industrial and manufacturing sectors. Nearly \$400 million is available for projects that reduce air pollution from industrial facilities and create jobs.

"My Administration is taking real action to create energy jobs and grow our economy – and today, our natural gas companies, mines, and industrial manufacturers can apply for this commonsense initiative that will help them continue growing their operations while reducing costs and air pollution in our communities," said Governor Josh Shapiro. "Through RISE PA, we will offer grants for companies working to make their operations more efficient, creating thousands of good-paying construction and manufacturing jobs in the process. This investment will help us reduce toxic air pollution, invest in our energy sector, and continue Pennsylvania's legacy of energy leadership."

"This program is going to create good paying union jobs, make Pennsylvania more competitive in global markets, and lead to cleaner air for us to breathe. It's a commonsense program that improves the economy and the environment," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "Pennsylvania has a long industrial history and this program is going to write the next chapter of it – more jobs, stronger communities, and cleaner air."

[Union labor, environmental advocates, and leaders from across the energy industry](#) have praised the RISE PA program, which will create jobs and lead to cleaner air and a stronger economy in Pennsylvania.

RISE PA establishes a competitive grant program to fund innovative projects that reduce pollution from industrial sources. Grant applications are being accepted through the [DEP website](#) until August 29, 2025, for the first round of awards.

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Shapiro Administration Launches RISE PA Initiative to Create Energy Jobs, Cut Costs, Grow Pennsylvania's Energy & Manufacturing Industries, and Lower Toxic Air Pollution continued)

The RISE PA program is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. Governor Shapiro has filed a lawsuit challenging the Trump Administration's unconstitutional freeze of federal funding, and thanks to the Governor's lawsuit and continued engagement with the Trump Administration, this funding is currently accessible to DEP.

Examples of eligible initiatives could include installing energy-efficient heat recovery systems to reduce the energy required to heat or cool an industrial facility, electrifying an industrial plant by swapping out diesel-powered generators with equipment that runs on electricity, and capturing coal mine methane from mining operations. All of these projects would make our air cleaner while creating good jobs and helping companies cut costs.

Prospective projects will need to satisfy the following proposed criteria:

Benefit communities near industrial sites that have higher rates of toxic air pollution

Achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions that are long-lasting and certain

Incorporate high labor standards, emphasize job quality, and support equitable workforce development

Pennsylvania has a long legacy as a national energy leader – for over one hundred years, the Commonwealth has been one of the nation's top energy producers, embracing innovation to create jobs, lower costs, and drive progress. RISE PA will continue that through grant awards that reduce emissions while supporting and creating good paying jobs.

Grants will be accepted through Friday, August 29, 2025, at 11:59 pm, with the first awards being announced in Fall 2025.

More information on the program, including application guidance, can be found on the [RISE PA page on the DEP website](#).

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The program is funded through a federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program grant awarded to Pennsylvania in July 2024.

Source: The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the DEP website"

Shapiro Administration Releases Test Results from SPS Technologies Fire; No Threat to Air Quality or Drinking Water

DEP has been performing air and water quality testing with EPA and City of Philadelphia, results posted on DEP's site today show that the fire had no lasting impacts on air quality and drinking water supplies remain safe.

Governor Shapiro and PEMA Director Randy Padfield thanked first responders and met with county leaders in Jenkintown.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) posted environmental testing results from the SPS Technologies fire in Montgomery County [online](#) today. Results show that air quality is at normal levels and drinking water supplies are not contaminated.

DEP has been working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) to conduct air and water quality monitoring around the site – to date, drinking water supplies are not at risk and testing from both the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) and DEP show no contamination in the Delaware River. Air quality monitors from the EPA have not detected any chemicals of concern in the air outside of the facility.

DEP and EPA will continue to monitor air and water quality. View the most up to date testing information on DEP's website for this incident: dep.pa.gov/spstechnologies.

"DEP personnel have been on-site every day since the fire began to monitor water quality, oversee emergency response efforts, and assist firefighters as needed. Sampling results by DEP show no concern for drinking water safety from the fire, and the department is working closely with SPS on the site's cleanup," said DEP Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley. "Moving forward, DEP will conduct inspections of storage tanks, ensure proper disposal of debris, and continue collaborating with SPS on the site's long-term plans."

SPS Technologies is a manufacturing company that produces fasteners and other materials for the aviation industry. When the fire broke out on February 17, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and DEP both dispatched emergency response personnel to the scene to help monitor environmental impacts and to assist the county and municipality as needed.

Governor Shapiro has been actively engaged with local authorities and leaders in Abington. On Saturday, February 22, Governor Shapiro and PEMA Director Randy Padfield [met with first responders](#) and leaders from Montgomery County, Abington Township, and SPS Technologies to continue to thank them for their work to keep Pennsylvanians safe and to offer help and resources as needed.

"Incidents like the one at this facility can quickly become more complicated due to the nature of the materials used onsite," said PEMA Director Randy Padfield. "Quickly establishing the coordination among state, county and local leadership and responders was essential to protecting both lives and property in the surrounding area."

PEMA staff continues to work with the county to assess any ongoing recovery needs for businesses or individuals that may have been impacted by the evacuation order, and are working with the county to assess any unmet needs from the first responders for equipment that may have been damaged or contaminated during the firefighting operations.

DEP Emergency Response Team personnel remain on site. SPS is actively pumping water used to put out the fire into holding tanks to prevent any material from entering Tookany Creek. The wastewater treatment facility on site is still operational and unaffected by the fire, and will be utilized to treat the fire water before it is sent to PWD for disposal. There remain no concerns for air quality or drinking water.

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Shapiro Administration Releases Test Results from SPS Technologies Fire; No Threat to Air Quality or Drinking Water (continued)

The fire has been extinguished. Once emergency response operations are fully demobilized and the building cleared for entry, DEP will initiate follow-up inspections. Both DEP and DEP-certified third-party inspectors will assess the facility's storage tanks, ensure the proper disposal of any remaining chemicals and debris, supervise the removal of asbestos, and collaborate with SPS on the development of future plans for the site.

For updates on any guidance from local authorities and information about help for affected Pennsylvanians, please visit Abington Township's website for this incident at abingtonpa.gov/spsupdates.

Source: The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Sign Up to Receive EPA's "Call it a Comeback" e-Newsletter

Today we launched our new "Call it a Comeback" e-Newsletter so the American people can stay up to date on the latest work our agency is undertaking. To sign up for the newsletter, press releases and other communications products, please visit our subscription page to start or modify your desired subscriptions to stay connected.

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

Source: U.S. EPA

Trump Administration Takes Action to Lower Cost of Living, Protect Consumer Choice for Household Appliances and Kitchen Faucets

EPA is overhauling WaterSense specifications imposed by the Biden-Harris Administration

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lee Zeldin announced that the agency has taken action to overhaul all Biden-Harris Administration WaterSense specifications. These specifications developed during the Biden-Harris Administration drive up the cost of living for American consumers and lower the quality of household appliances.

“Americans deserve access to the best products in their homes, and appliances like shower heads and lightbulbs that work,” **said EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin.** “That’s why I’ve instructed EPA’s WaterSense program to overhaul their specifications that best factor in effectiveness and consumer experience. Together with the Department of Energy and President Trump’s leadership we are working to not only lower costs for American families but improve the quality of household appliances.”

The Biden-Harris Administration weaponized energy efficiency rules to restrict consumer choice in many home appliances. If we do not act, the last Administration’s actions will make new home appliances more expensive and contribute to a higher cost of living for Americans.

The list of specifications developed during the last Administration have encouraged the sale of bathroom and kitchen faucets, residential toilets, and sprinkler nozzles that just don’t work well.

At the same time, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is also undertaking a process of postponing seven home appliance rules that were finalized under the Biden-Harris Administration, including energy efficiency standards for central air conditioners, clothes washers and dryers, general service lamps, walk-in coolers and freezers, gas instantaneous water heaters, commercial refrigeration equipment, and air compressors. DOE will also establish a new energy efficiency category for instantaneous gas hot water heaters.

Under the leadership of President Trump, Federal agencies continue to slash unnecessary red tape and regulations that raise the cost of living, reduce consumer choice, and frustrate the American people.

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

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