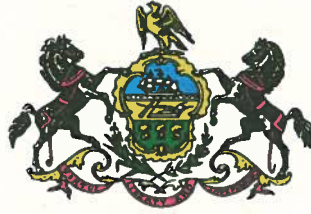


21ST SENATORIAL DISTRICT

**MARY JO WHITE**

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**Senate of Pennsylvania**

September 30, 2009

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WILD RESOURCE CONSERVATION FUND

Venango News  
The Derrick/News Herald  
1510 West First Street  
Oil City, PA 16301

Dear Editor:

Numerous constituents have contacted me to express their displeasure with the discontinuation of the black fly and West Nile virus spraying by DEP in Venango County.

I have been urging DEP throughout the entire budget impasse not to discontinue these important programs. It does little good to approve a budget appropriation for fall spraying in October or November when the real need is in the late summer and early fall months.

I live along the Allegheny River and have attended numerous community events, from Oil 150 to Polk Center, so I need no convincing that the lack of spraying is having a significant impact on people trying to enjoy the outdoors – or students just trying to go outside for recess. I have repeatedly urged DEP Secretary Hanger and Governor Rendell to find funding – somewhere – to continue spraying. I have even pointed out specific “special” funds within DEP that could be used for spraying and which do not require approval in the budget.

Therefore, it is particularly disturbing to hear DEP officials tell residents that the blame lies solely with the state legislature. The fact is DEP has money available – today – to spray. Furthermore, when the “bridge” budget was presented to Governor Rendell in early August, he specifically chose to veto a \$5.1 million black fly appropriation and a \$5.2 million West Nile virus appropriation – choosing instead to approve only a small fraction of money needed to pay DEP employees and rejecting the money used for spraying. He did, of course, approve full funding for his own offices.

The budget impasse has affected a lot of people, and both the legislature and the Governor are partly at fault. But with regard to black fly and West Nile virus spraying, the fact is the Governor had the money available and chose not to use it. That is wrong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Jo White".

Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee