



Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White Chairman

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Letter to the Editor
Philadelphia Inquirer
400 North Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130

Dear Editor:

Tucked away in your recent editorial (*Drilling for Friends*) is your claim that the state Senate approved legislation which would reduce the Department of Environmental Protection's enforcement budget by 30%. That is nonsense.

While DEP's overall General Fund budget will decline by \$58 million, little of this money is from enforcement. Much of the money comes from eliminating \$11 million for safe water funds (which the Inquirer once referred to as "WAMs") and \$15 million for consumer energy rebates. This funding is more than offset by the \$1.2 billion in water infrastructure bonds approved by the legislature last year, an additional \$220 million in federal stimulus funds for water infrastructure, and nearly \$253 million in federal stimulus funds for consumer energy efficiency projects. Additionally, DEP will soon have approved nearly \$20 million in new annual revenue from higher fees on the regulated community. When all is added up, DEP will actually be spending more money this year than last year.

Regarding natural gas drilling, the Senate approved a drilling permit fee increase that will see DEP's revenue rise from \$800,000 annually to nearly \$12 million annually. All of this money will be used to hire more inspectors and ensure that our environmental laws are enforced.

Every agency, including DEP, has to share some pain when facing a \$3.2 billion budget deficit. But the suggestion that this has come at the expense of protecting the environment is simply wrong.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Jo White, Chairman
Senate Environmental Resources
& Energy Committee