



Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White
Chairman

Patrick Henderson, Executive Director

Room 169 • State Capitol Building
Mailing address: Senate Box 203021 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-3021
Phone: 717-787-9684 • FAX: 717-787-6088 • energy@pasen.gov

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Letters to the Editor
The Patriot News
812 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Editor:

While the recent state budget contains difficult spending reductions for all agencies, necessitated by a \$3.2 billion deficit, your recent article leaves an inaccurate impression on how much money the state's environmental and conservation agencies have available to do their job.

An important component lacking from your report is the fact that both DEP and DCNR receive money outside of the state budget bill. For example, DEP is slated to receive nearly \$20 million in new revenue from higher permitting fees – money that will go directly to paying for personnel costs. Additionally, many of the cuts to DEP's budget were for discretionary grant programs, including the elimination of one program the Patriot News has criticized as "WAMs".

Likewise, DCNR suffered cuts to its budget, but your article overlooks that the agency has \$25 million available to it from leasing state forests for natural gas development. Recall that in Governor Rendell's first year, he cut state park funding by 20% and not a single park closed. The budget package also sets aside \$50 million in future royalty money for DCNR to use virtually anywhere in its budget. And, both DEP and DCNR continue to benefit from other off-budget programs, such as Growing Greener and the Keystone Fund.

The budget cuts are real, and will require difficult management decisions. But your readers deserve an accurate picture of the total resources agencies have available to do their job.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Jo White, Chairman
Senate Environmental Resources
& Energy Committee