



# Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

Senator Mary Jo White  
Chairman

*Patrick Henderson, Executive Director*

Room 168 • State Capitol Building  
Mailing address: Senate Box 203021 • Harrisburg, PA 17120-3021  
Phone: 717-787-9684 • FAX: 717-787-6088

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May 14, 2009

Jonathan Quigley, Acting Secretary  
Department of Conservation & Natural Resources  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Mr. Quigley:

I am writing to request information concerning claims made in your press release earlier today regarding the potential budgetary impact of Senate Bill 850.

- 1) SB 850 appropriates approximately \$19 million less for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) budget than proposed by the Governor. To ease this pain, would you be willing to utilize any of the \$7 million that your Department informs me you have encumbered within the Oil and Gas Lease Fund to build a carbon sequestration network to help restore these cuts?
- 2) DCNR recently failed to successfully close two bids for Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling on state forest land that would have realized approximately \$31 million for the budget. Please describe the circumstances that led to this failure, and what steps DCNR took to try and address the concerns raised by the successful bidder.
- 3) Please state your thoughts on whether, as Acting Secretary, you would be willing to lead the effort to lease – in a responsible manner – additional state forest lands for Marcellus Shale natural gas development, if sufficient money from the lease sale was retained by DCNR to cover the spending reductions identified in your press release.
- 4) Please identify the 35 state parks that will close should SB 850 be enacted (no doubt the department did an analysis before making such a specific claim).
- 5) Please identify how many/which state parks would close should the Governor's proposed state park funding reduction of 4.5% be enacted.
- 6) As Acting Secretary, are you willing to advocate for legislation authorizing user/entrance fees for state parks to prevent the closure of any state parks?
- 7) Please provide the criteria and process utilized by DCNR to identify the following:
  - a. Number/location of state parks that will close under SB 850

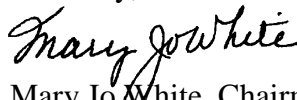
- b. Mileage/location of state forest roads to close under SB 850
  - c. Studies/justification to support the assertion that SB 850 would lead to 3 million fewer state park visitors and \$57 million in reduced visitor spending in local communities
- 8) Last year the General Assembly appropriated \$5.206 million for forest pest management (gypsy moth spraying). Governor Rendell reduced authorized spending by \$819,000 in response to the current deficit, leaving a total of \$4.387 million for gypsy moth spraying in FY '08-'09.

SB 850 appropriates \$4.387 million for gypsy moth spraying in FY '09-'10 – the same amount as DCNR has available for the current year.

- a. How many fewer acres does DCNR anticipate spraying in FY '08-'09 because of the \$819,000 placed in budgetary reserve?
  - b. When the Governor reduced gypsy moth spraying to the level authorized in SB 850, did DCNR issue a press release advising Pennsylvanians of the reduction in spraying, and criticizing the Governor for reducing your authorized spending? If so, please provide a copy of the press release.
- 9) Your press release warns that a program which sells tree seedlings to landowners would be eliminated.
- a. Have you examined raising the price of the tree seedlings to reflect the true cost of the program, rather than relying on a taxpayer subsidy?
  - b. Have you considered utilizing money from the Environmental Stewardship Fund, the Key '93 Fund, or other funds at the Department's discretion to augment this program, recognizing that DCNR has used this discretionary funding to award over \$1 million to the PA Horticultural Society to plant trees?
- 10) Your release actually *criticizes* Senators for implementing the *Governor's* recommended funding elimination for the heritage parks program. To be clear, I strongly support the heritage parks program but recognize that even programs which I personally support will face cuts. Therefore, do you support Governor Rendell's "prudent but difficult" decision to not fund heritage parks in his budget proposal?
- 11) In February, Governor Rendell proposed a nearly \$7 million funding reduction for DCNR. Given the significantly higher budget deficit which has materialized over the past three months, as well as your criticism of SB 850, please identify what additional prudent but difficult cuts you believe are necessary to respond to the new \$2.9 billion projected deficit.

I look forward to your response to these questions as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee