

**Statement of
John Quigley
Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Before the
Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
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Madame Chairperson and distinguished members of this Committee, it is an honor to come before you this morning as Governor Edward G. Rendell's nominee for the Commonwealth's Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

I have had the privilege of serving as Acting Secretary of DCNR since April 6 of this year. In that time, I have come to have an even deeper appreciation of the women and men of DCNR who are deeply committed to our mission and who are among the finest public servants in this or any state.

I also have appreciated the opportunity to meet individually with the members of the Pennsylvania Senate. I am grateful for the time and courtesy extended to me, and I value our conversations and the opportunity to work with each of you in the months ahead.

I would like to reflect briefly on the opportunities and challenges facing DCNR. I came to the agency a little more than four years ago, drawn by the Governor's commitment to positioning natural resource conservation as central to sustainable economic growth in the Commonwealth, by the dynamism and collaborative spirit of my predecessor, Michael DiBerardinis.

I was inspired by the agency's action plan: *Shaping A Sustainable Pennsylvania*, which built upon DCNR's historic mission of protecting and enhancing Pennsylvania's public lands and extended it to contribute leadership, knowledge and resources in support of Pennsylvania's citizens and their environment. Our action plan has propelled DCNR to view itself as not only the steward for our state park and forest lands, but also as chief advocate for the natural resources of the state; the lead agency for land conservation and outdoor recreation; and a critical player in economic growth and community revitalization.

Much of our work has been made possible by the bipartisan work of the Governor, the members of this committee, and the General Assembly in passing Growing Greener 2, which provided an unprecedented level of resources that allowed for significant investments in the components of our action plan.

In my view, the call to action of *Shaping A Sustainable Pennsylvania* is more important today than it was when the plan was completed almost six years ago. I am committed to continuing this vitally important work. Across the state, communities are turning to their natural resources to improve the quality of life of their citizens, to become more competitive for jobs and residents, and as the basis for sustainable economic development initiatives. Using outdoor recreation, land conservation, river connections, and collaborative community planning as tools, we are helping communities create a more prosperous future. Our state's magnificent public forests and a state parks system that is among the nation's finest are now viewed as not only as a vitally important public birthright, but as assets in the forging of sustainable communities and economies.

We have strived to connect our citizens to their natural resources through innovative outreach and communications programs. We are helping citizens to embrace stewardship; to recreate in the natural world in the many forms that are abundantly available to all Pennsylvanians; and to support conservation in their communities' aspirations. Our environment and our economy are the beneficiaries.

We have maintained the balance between providing for the Commonwealth's energy and forest product needs from state forest land and the absolute imperative of protecting the multiple environmental, ecological, and indeed economic benefits that our public forests provide.

Our Commonwealth is facing the challenge of climate change – the single biggest threat to our natural heritage, our economy, and public health. There are opportunities to develop Pennsylvania's abundant coal and biomass energy resources in ways that can grow our economy and improve our environment at the same time. In each of these cases, DCNR strives to lead, to partner, to collaborate, and to sensitively manage in achieving these opportunities for our state.

We have published guidance on economically and environmentally sustainable harvesting of forest biomass for energy. In fact, the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Biofuels Advisory Panel has recommended that all other states in the bay watershed publish similar guidance that will assist in reaching the shared goal of becoming the national leader in the next generation of biofuels.

In appointing me as Acting Secretary, Governor Rendell asked me to continue DCNR's tradition as a peerless land manager and to continue executing our action plan. He also asked me to continue the work I have led within DCNR to identify opportunities for the Commonwealth to take the lead in the commercial deployment of carbon capture and storage technology. Our work in assessing the state's geology to support a carbon storage network also responds to the direction of the General Assembly in Act 129 of 2008. We are partnering with our sister agency the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a business plan for an integrated carbon storage network in Pennsylvania. This technology has the potential to substantially reduce the state's carbon dioxide emissions, allow for the continued use of Pennsylvania's coal resources while

cleaning our air, and has the potential to create thousands of research and development, manufacturing, construction, retrofit, and export jobs in the Commonwealth.

I would like to commend Senator Erickson, as well as Representatives Greg Vitali, Chris Ross, and Eugene DePasquale, for their sponsorship of Senate Bill 92 and House Bill 80, respectively. These proposals would provide essential support for the deployment of this technology in Pennsylvania.

In all of these areas and more, DCNR is striving to meet the high calling of our action plan, and to help position the state's natural resources – and their conservation – as essential to the shaping of a sustainable, healthy, and prosperous future for our state. I will do my best to meet those challenges with fidelity.

Allow me to address a subject that has been at the center of our conversations recently – the state budget and its impact on DCNR. I want to emphasize this morning that I fully and deeply appreciate the mammoth challenge that the Governor and members of the General Assembly face in confronting the most severe recession since the Great Depression. I have had the honor of serving as an elected official for eight years as the mayor of the City of Hazleton in Luzerne County. I know fully the difficult choices you face. Each of you has my respect and my gratitude for entering the arena.

I believe it is my duty to provide the Governor, the members of the General Assembly, and the citizens of this state with honest, accurate information about DCNR's budget and the impact of proposals affecting it. I have done so. Over the last six and a half years, the Governor has challenged all state agencies to do more with less. Indeed, as we meet here today, the budget for our state parks is \$2 million less than it was in 2002, seven years ago. And in that time, we opened the Tom Ridge Environmental Center at Presque Isle State Park, responded to the immense ecotourism possibilities in the Pennsylvania Wilds, and maintained a high quality visitor experience. With 70 percent of the Parks budget and 80 percent of Forestry's budget accounted for by personnel costs, substantial reductions to an already very lean operating budget can have no other impact than a reduction in public services.

I know that there is no one in this room today, or indeed in this building, who wants to close state parks and reduce access to our public lands. I assure you that I do not. We will do our best to continue to provide the most accurate analysis possible on the options before us as we confront the current economic crisis.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for considering my nomination. I am confident that we will together meet both the challenges and the opportunities before us today, and those that lie ahead. I look forward to working with you in that effort.

Thank you very much.