



# Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee

**Senator Mary Jo White**  
Chairman

*Patrick Henderson, Executive Director*

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November 17, 2010

The Honorable John Quigley  
Secretary of Conservation & Natural Resources  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor Rachel Carson Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Secretary Quigley:

I am writing in regards to a recent announcement by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) concerning the acquisition of 2,650 acres of land which will be added to Lackawanna State Forest. The land is located in portions of Lackawanna, Luzern and Monroe counties.

As you know, I have been a strong supporter of the Growing Greener program and its revenue sources. The program has enabled both the state and local communities to make key investments that protect and enhance the Commonwealth's natural resources. However, I have several questions regarding this transaction and would appreciate your prompt assistance in providing answers to the following questions:

- 1) It is my understanding from DCNR staff that DCNR is using approximately \$2.2 million in Growing Greener II bond money for this acquisition. Is this accurate?
- 2) What private or non-profit sources of funding are being used as part of this acquisition?
- 3) It is my understanding from DCNR staff that the mineral rights were not acquired in this transaction, and instead may revert to DCNR in approximately 20 years. Is this accurate?
  - a. If accurate, why were the mineral rights not acquired, particularly given DCNR's public statements recently expressing concern about the impact of natural gas extraction on state park and forest land?
  - b. Who owns the mineral rights, and have any permits been applied for and is natural gas extraction considered likely in this area in the coming years?
- 4) It was my impression from your testimony before the Senate and House Appropriations Committees that Growing Greener II bond money was exhausted. This appears to not be accurate. I note that in DCNR's October 14, 2010 press release announcing \$23 million in grant projects, you noted that 177 applications were unable to be funded because of depleted sources of revenue. Why was this \$2.2 million not used to fund some of these 177 applications?

- 5) How much bond money allocated to DCNR from the \$625 million Growing Greener II bond remains unencumbered?
- 6) DCNR has expressed significant concern about natural gas drilling operations and its potential impact on state parks and forests. DCNR has amplified its concern regarding drilling activities in state parks and forests where the Commonwealth does not own the mineral rights. Given these public statements of concern, why did DCNR not utilize this available money to purchase easements or mineral rights that would better protect existing state park and forest resources?

I look forward to your prompt response. If you require additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee