



# 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 20, 2009

Sarah Hetznecker, Chair  
Climate Change Advisory Committee  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rachel Carson Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Ms. Hetznecker:

It is my understanding that the Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) will be considering a motion to express its support for Senate Bill 829 at the Committee's upcoming meeting. As prime sponsor of this legislation, I am writing to urge the CCAC to support this legislation.

Senate Bill 829 makes two substantive changes to Act 70, the Pennsylvania Climate Change Act. First, the bill extends the deadline for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to submit a final action plan by three months. Second, the bill ensures that DEP holds a 60 day public comment period on a draft plan, and prepares a comment and response document based on the input the department receives from the public.

The current deadline for submittal of an action plan is October 9, 2009. It is my understanding that DEP intends to hold a public comment period on the full plan only after it has been submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly. This approach, necessitated by the compressed timeframe put forth by DEP to finalize the plan in October, is contrary to the public involvement process envisioned when the General Assembly enacted Act 70.

Senate Bill 829 does not require DEP to wait an additional three months before submitting an action plan; if the public comment and response period can be accommodated prior to January 9<sup>th</sup>, then DEP is free to submit a report earlier than this date. However, if the action plan is to have the credibility envisioned when Act 70 was crafted to influence action by the General Assembly and the Governor, it is imperative that the public be afforded meaningful input – including the ability to have reasonable suggestions and comments incorporated into the plan – before it is submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Senate Bill 829 was unanimously approved by the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee on May 5<sup>th</sup>. I am hopeful that the CCAC will encourage DEP to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Jo White, Chairman  
Senate Environmental Resources  
& Energy Committee

cc: Climate Change Advisory Committee