

November 24, 2009

**EDITORS:** The following information is for immediate release. If you have any questions, please contact Tim Connor, Senior Director of the Chester County Economic Development Council, at 610 458-5700.

## **Proposed state environmental guidelines deemed a threat to business and property owners**

*Residents urged to contact PADEP by November 30 to oppose regulations*

**EXTON** \_ Business groups throughout southeastern Pennsylvania are urging business and residents to contact the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection by November 30 to oppose proposed regulations that will infringe on property rights, impose onerous building regulations and greatly increase construction costs.

Area business organizations, including a Chester County engineering group and the Home Builders Association of Chester/Delaware Counties and the Home Builders Association of Bucks/Montgomery Counties have already offered testimony against the implementation of the proposed regulations.

The Chester County Economic Development Council has hosted a meeting to review the proposed regulations. According to the Economic Development Council, "In talking to many of our members and industry experts, it seems clear that these regulations will result in decreased yields, lengthier approval processes, increased construction and design costs, and the denial of permit extensions. Additionally, existing approved projects will not be grandfathered under these new regulations."

"While we are sure the new regulations are well intended, we believe they are misguided. At a time when our county, region and state desperately need economic development projects to create jobs, these regulations will delay projects, make them more expensive and, in many cases, completely kill projects."

Mark S. Mitman of the Home Building Associations informed the DEP, "The requirement to establish a riparian forest buffer that consists predominantly native species is a problematic one on several fronts. Economically, the cost of removing invasive species along the entire width of a buffer – on both sides of a stream – will necessarily pose a financial hardship on the applicant. Environmentally, the impact of disturbing the whole length of the stream bank to remove such species would seem to contradict the environmental objectives of maintaining a buffer by presenting the real possibility of creating a significant pollution event to the stream. And pragmatically, why create unnecessary cost and environmental risk when, after 5 years, they invasive species will likely return? The HBAs recommend removing all language referencing the removal of weeds and invasive species."

Mitman also commented, "Our organizations feel that the proposal to raise fees for NPDES permits by 1,000% is excessive. It is our understanding that these new fees would underwrite

conservation district expenses, even though the districts have the power to set their own fee schedule in addition to the proposed fee schedule.”

Businesses and individuals need to make DEP and the Commonwealth aware of the consequences we see from these regulations. Comments are being accepted until the end of the month. Businesses having anything to do with real estate, engineering, consulting and development are urged to contact the Commonwealth before November 30.

Comments being electronically submitted should be sent to [RegComments@state.pa.us](mailto:RegComments@state.pa.us) with a subject heading of "Proposed Chapter 102 Regulations." Written comment should be sent to DEP Environmental Quality Board, Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market Street, 16th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101-2301.

The Chester County Economic Development Council is a private, non-profit economic development organization that has been nurturing economic growth in Chester County and the surrounding region for nearly 50 years. The Council’s portfolio of business growth services includes: low-interest financing, small business lending, workforce training, retention and expansion, customized international business assistance, land and building site selection, brownfields consultation and remediation, urban redevelopment, and agricultural economic development. The Council also offers state-of-the art conference and training facilities at its facility in Eagleview. For more information, see [www.cceconomicdevelopment.com](http://www.cceconomicdevelopment.com).