

**PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS, INC.**

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

**Achieving Pennsylvania's Energy Independence Goals While Strengthening
Conservation Planning in PA – The Critical Role of Pennsylvania's Conservation Districts**

(Harrisburg, PA) - The Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc. (PACD) has released an Energy Strategy proposal for increased technical assistance to farmers as they consider altering their farm operations to provide the Commonwealth and the Nation with renewable energy sources. Pennsylvania, along with the rest of the nation, has been advocating increased production and usage of renewable energy sources. New technologies are being developed that utilize combustion, anaerobic digestion and gasification to generate energy from manure and other feedstocks. For example, nationwide, corn production has increased significantly, in part, to accommodate greater use for ethanol production. In fact, this year corn production in Pennsylvania alone increased by 100,000 acres from the previous growing season.

A recent report from the Chesapeake Bay Commission entitled, "Biofuels and the Bay" stated, "Handled correctly, biofuels have the potential to provide significant and permanent new income sources for farmers and foresters, while serving as a means to substantially reduce greenhouse gases and better manage agricultural nutrient loadings within the watershed. Handled incorrectly, biofuels could lead to shifts in crop patterns and acreages that create an uncertain future for farmers and foresters and seriously worsen the overload of nutrients to our rivers and the Bay."

The PACD Energy Strategy includes funding for conservation districts that choose to expand technical assistance capacity commensurate with the development of biofuel and alternative energy production while also protecting soil, water, and air resources. Susan Marquart, PACD Executive Director stated, "We are requesting that any legislation creating a comprehensive energy initiative include \$5 million to position districts with the personnel necessary to provide new technical assistance for enhancing energy production derived from agricultural practices." She concluded, "The goal is providing conservation districts with the funding necessary to assist the farming community with implementing conservation practices in conjunction with Pennsylvania's energy production."

PACD, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization representing Pennsylvania's 66 conservation districts. For more information on the PACD and for a copy of the Energy Strategy visit www.pacd.org.

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