

**Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Inc.**  
**BUDGET REQUEST FOR CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

**Fiscal Year (FY) 2010/11**

TRANSFER TO THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT FUND

**PACD recommends that \$10 million be allocated to conservation districts, split evenly between the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture.**

<b>Transfer to the Conservation District Fund</b>	<b>Budget Final FY 2009/10</b>	<b>Governor's Proposal FY 2010/11</b>	<b>PACD Request FY 2010/11</b>
PA Dept. Env. Protection	\$ 3,060,000	\$ 3,029,000	\$ 5,000,000
PA Dept. Agriculture	\$ 1,650,000	\$1,080,000	\$ 5,000,000

In FY 2009/10, conservation districts received an 11% cut from the previous fiscal year's appropriation. The Governor has proposed another 13% decrease in conservation district funding for next fiscal year. If enacted, the Governor's proposal will reduce the funding for conservation districts back to the level received more than ten years ago in FY 1999/00.

In addition to operating without a much needed increase in funding, conservation districts are operating several state delegated and contracted programs without any state funding support. These programs include Chapter 105 permitting, Biosolids, NPDES Phase 2, and the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP). These programs are being conducted using staff that is already overextended by existing programs.

Although the Department of Environmental Protection is raising permit fees for the Erosion and Sedimentation Program, this will not solve the financial crisis facing conservation districts since many rural counties do not have substantial development activities and thus will not generate significant revenue from permit fees. Given that there are several state programs with no state funding, and that state funding for many existing programs is inadequate and declining, conservation districts are faced with the difficult decision of reducing or eliminating programs in order to meet budgetary constraints.

CHESAPEAKE BAY AGRICULTURAL SOURCE ABATEMENT PROGRAM

**PACD recommends that \$3.214 million be allocated for the Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Source Abatement Program in the Department of Environmental Protection budget.**

<b>Chesapeake Bay Agricultural Source Abatement Program</b>	<b>Budget Final FY 2009/10</b>	<b>Governor's Proposal FY 2010/11</b>	<b>PACD Request FY 2010/11</b>
PA Dept. Env. Protection	\$ 3,032,000	\$ 3,002,000	\$ 3,214,000

In FY 2009/10, this line item received a 6% reduction from the previous year's appropriation. The Governor's current proposal reduces this line by an additional 1%. A large portion of this line item provides funding for conservation district Chesapeake Bay Technicians, Engineers and Engineering Technicians that provide technical assistance to farmers. Although federal funding through the Farm Bill's Chesapeake Bay Initiative will provide additional funding to Pennsylvania, these funds are targeted specifically for farmers and landowners in priority watersheds to implement best management practices on farms, and for contribution agreements to match state dollars for entities providing technical assistance within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, but not for other activities by conservation districts. In order to prepare the agricultural community for the impacts of the impending new water quality restrictions resulting from the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements by implementing best management practices on farms, and to obtain the federal matching technical assistance dollars, funding for this program must be restored to at least FY 2008/09 levels.

**TRANSFER TO THE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT FUND**

**PACD recommends that \$3.556 million be allocated for the Nutrient Management Fund in the Department of Agriculture budget.**

<b>Transfer to Nutrient Management Fund</b>	<b>Budget Final FY 2009/10</b>	<b>Governor's Proposal FY 2010/11</b>	<b>PACD Request FY 2010/11</b>
PA Dept. of Agriculture	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,556,000

Act 38 of 2005 mandated that the State Conservation Commission (SCC) implement the Nutrient Management Program in Pennsylvania. The SCC has delegated some of its authority to implement this program to conservation districts. A large portion of this line item provides funding for conservation district Nutrient Management Technicians that deliver technical support to implement the Nutrient Management Program in Pennsylvania. This line needs to be restored to previous levels to ensure continued technical capacity in the conservation districts and other program elements required by law, such as the Manure Hauler/Broker Certification and Odor Management Regulations.

**GROWING GREENER**

**PACD recommends that the General Assembly address the impending elimination of funding for Pennsylvania's Growing Greener Programs.**

The Growing Greener I and Growing Greener II Programs provide funding for a wide variety of environmental stewardship projects. Unfortunately, the funding for these programs will terminate because the solid waste tipping fees used to fund Growing Greener I were diverted to pay off the bond issues used to fund Growing Greener II. The continued funding of these programs is essential to maintain the stewardship efforts that conservation districts, watershed organizations, educational institutions, and others are currently implementing. Some of the efforts of conservation districts that are funded through Growing Greener include: the Watershed Specialist positions, stream restoration projects, stream buffers, abandoned mine drainage treatment, agricultural best management practices, and stormwater management practices.