

APPENDIX D (2001)

WATER RESOURCES CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND PLANNING

I. General Policy

The PACD recognizes that water resources are critical to the future of Pennsylvania and need to be both quantitatively and qualitatively protected from human abuse. Any consideration of water resources should equally consider both surface and ground water. Water withdrawals and water quality should be considered equally important in any water resources plan.

Consideration should be given to developing and fostering methods through which multiple-use can be achieved without depleting water resources for downstream users. Protecting the resource ecosystem should receive equal consideration with meeting society's varied demands.

The protection of water quality still remains a major concern. PACD heartily endorses the watershed approach in addressing water quality as it does current nonpoint pollution prevention programs. Continued vigilance is urged in addressing point source discharges and the use of water resources as heat dissipaters.

Legislation is needed to adequately address these water issues and provide for the harmonized use of water resources. This legislation should give the State appropriate legal authority and provide for adequate planning approaches through the development and revision of its state water plan. The PACD, however, opposes any action that would necessitate any additional permitting authority until the conditions in the following paragraphs are met.

II. State Water Plan

Any water resource plan must be predicated on a comprehensive evaluation of all water resources statewide. The plan should take into consideration and provide for existing uses and demand, projected development, prior shortages, historical use patterns, seasonal weather conditions, storm water management, water quality data, water consumptive and shortage considerations, intra- and inter-water basin exchanges, and other long-term planning conditions. The plan should also consider proactive initiatives such as education, ground water recharge and implementation of best management practices (BMPs).

III. The PACD believes that any legislation regarding the Commonwealth's water resources should include the following:

- A. Authority to update the Commonwealth's water management plan
Legislation should provide criteria, standards, and a schedule for periodic review and revision to ensure that the plan addresses current conditions.
- B. A requirement for a statewide inventory and assessment of water availability and use
A statewide inventory and assessment of all of the State's water resources should be the foundation of any state water plan. The State Water Plan should recognize the importance of groundwater recharge from open space areas such as those provided by agricultural farmland and woodlots, if and when setting standards for agricultural water withdrawal.

- C. A registration and reporting system for cataloging water uses
Registration and reporting of water utilization is critical in addressing water needs, current consumption and projecting future needs, as well as for administering any programs dealing with current or future water shortages. Agricultural interests should make sure that agricultural utilization of water is properly documented to ensure that these water needs will be given adequate consideration in the future.
- D. A thorough public discussion of any changes to the State's current water management plan
Public participation is a prerequisite for public acceptance. Legislation should provide for public hearings as well as the use of advisory boards. Criteria should be established to ensure that public hearings are not just window dressing.
- E. Local participation
Legislation should provide for local protection and administration of withdrawals in so far as possible. The state should mandate minimums, maximums, and standards and criteria but should rely on county administration whenever feasible. Planning should be done at the sub-basin level whenever feasible.
- F. An acknowledgement that Conservation Districts are the lead agencies for water resource conservation and technical assistance
Any requirement on DEP to provide local water conservation and technical assistance should be administered through conservation districts. The power and authority for these activities are provided through paragraph (8), Section 9 of Act 217 of 1945 (as amended) which states that Conservation Districts have the power and authority:

"To assist and advise owners and occupiers of land in developing and/or implementing plans for storm water use, water management and water pollution control, soil erosion control and conservation of water and soil resources, including recommended engineering practices, cultivation methods, cropping programs, tillage practices and changes of land use;"
- G. Funding for Conservation Districts to provide technical assistance, education and other services for water conservation and management
Conservation Districts should be reimbursed by DEP through permit fees (for water withdrawal or diversion) or other funds, for the services they provide.
- H. Counties, regions and/or river basin commissions that have already addressed water issues locally should have primacy where their plans meet or exceed state requirements or criteria
- I. Financial incentives for needed BMPs
Financial incentives should be available for BMPs to encourage better infiltration of storm water and designing new and/or retrofitting existing storm water detention systems to increase infiltration of rainwater and/or improve runoff water quality.

IV. Oppose

PACD opposes any action that would necessitate any additional permitting authority until the aforementioned tasks are completed.