



**The General Assembly**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG  
April 10, 2013

The Honorable Tom Corbett  
Governor  
225 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Corbett:

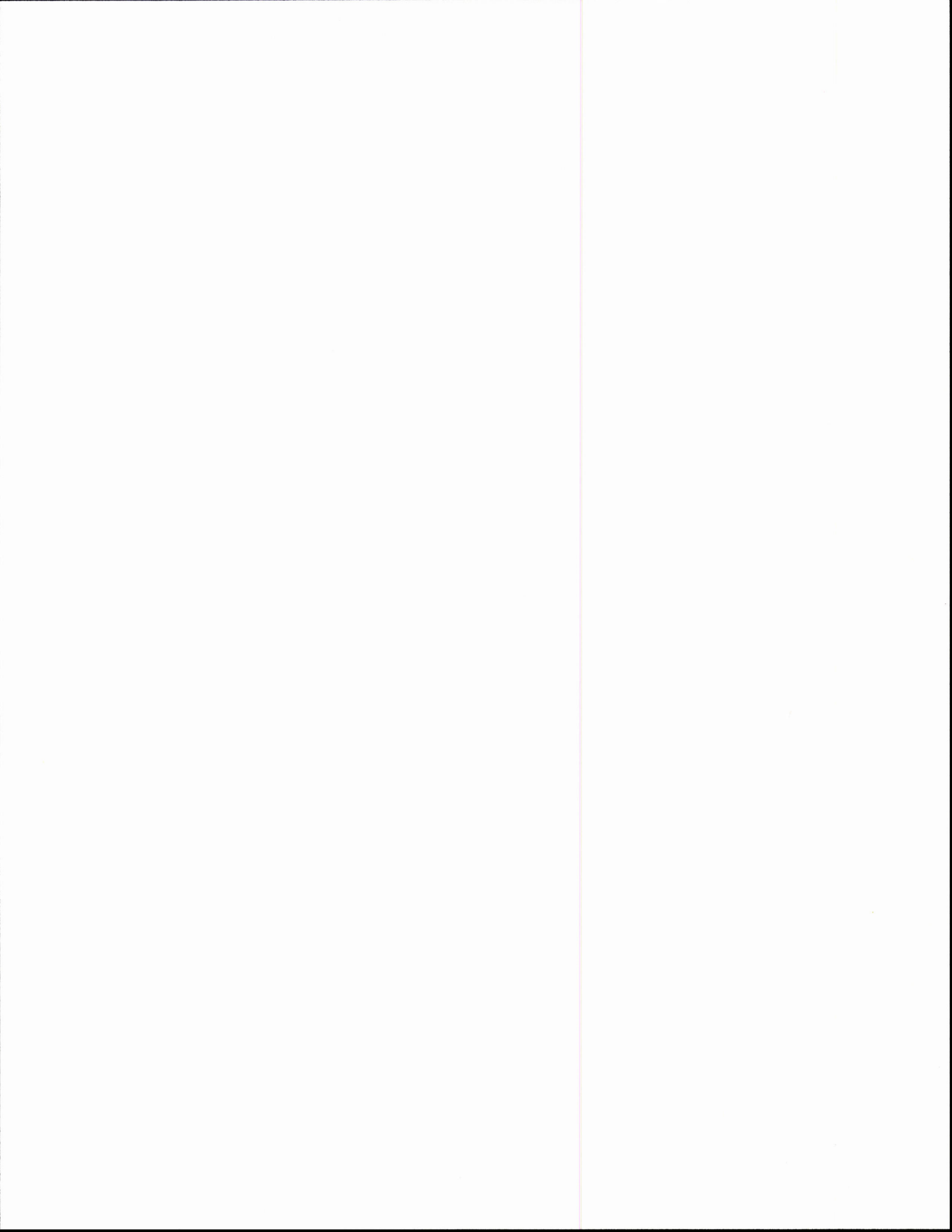
The recent Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) guidance document aimed at reducing nitrate levels in on-lot sewage systems, published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on March 2, 2013, will have a devastating effect on future development in Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties.

This guidance document addresses the most common form of on-lot sewage treatment systems, the septic system, and involves the subsurface disposal of treated sewage to a soil absorption field. It applies only to new or replacement residential or community on-lot system installations located in High Quality (HQ) or Exceptional Value (EV) watersheds.

Septic systems are frequently used in these rural counties because existing rules make it difficult to place a sewage treatment plant in HQ and EV areas. The watersheds in these communities are by-and-large designated HQ and EV.

Area sewage enforcement officers and county planners have asserted that the proposed DEP policy offers an unreasonable approach to water quality protection and fails to utilize science-based techniques. Their analysis includes several studies conducted in northeastern Pennsylvania that show that water quality has improved over the past several decades. They also point to a lack of increased nitrates, despite an increase in residential and commercial development within special protected watersheds.

The residents of Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties have worked very hard to preserve their protected water designations, as the environmental value of protected waterways is paramount to an economy based on recreational tourism. In an area facing high unemployment and difficulty in attracting new businesses, the cost of meeting these proposed new restrictions will be highly prohibitive, crippling the development of new housing communities, prohibiting existing businesses from expanding and making new commercial construction nearly impossible.

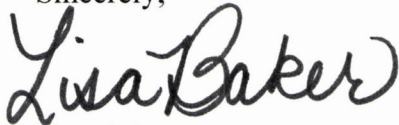


Additionally, the policy will negatively affect taxpayers because the valuable land along waterways will not be available for development, resulting in a decreased tax base and loss of revenue for municipalities, counties and school districts.

We strongly urge you to delay any formal adoption of this guidance document following the expiration of the formal comment period on May 2, 2013. We ask that you conduct local and statewide public hearings to receive community input on its affect on future economic development across the state.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

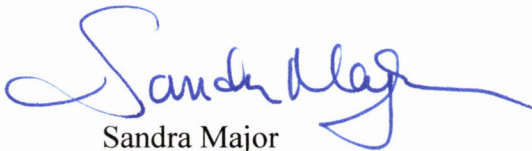
Sincerely,



Lisa Baker  
Senator, 20<sup>th</sup> District



Rosemary Brown  
State Representative, 189<sup>th</sup> District



Sandra Major  
State Representative, 111<sup>th</sup> District



Mike Peifer  
State Representative, 139<sup>th</sup> District



Mario Scavello  
State Representative, 176<sup>th</sup> District

pc: E. Christopher Abruzzo, Acting DEP Secretary  
Thomas Starosta, Bureau of Point & Non-Point Source Management  
Division Planning & Permits - DEP  
Monroe County Commissioners  
Pike County Commissioners  
Wayne County Commissioners

