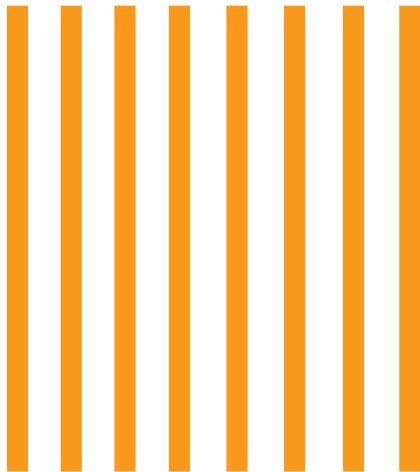




Serving Counties Since 1886

Conservation/Land Use

COUNTY GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES



Fact Sheet 2007

Counties are instrumental in several areas that impact the quality of life and environmental quality in Pennsylvania, as diverse as land use planning, water supply planning, stewardship of energy resources, development of alternative energy resources, development of recreational opportunities and preservation of agricultural lands and open space.

Counties are lead partners with the state in Pennsylvania's premier farmland preservation program. Counties' local dollars—derived from either county property taxes or a county bond issue—match dollars from the state to fund farmland and open space preservation. Counties seek additional revenue for farmland and open space preservation in order to keep ahead of the pace of development. The Association's platform supports a county realty transfer fee of up to one percent that would be levied at the discretion of the commissioners and used to fund farmland and open space preservation. In order to ensure that these lands continue to be available for public use, counties believe it is critical to strengthen laws that protect landowners from liability for injuries that recreational users sustain on their property.

As energy costs have increased, county budgets have been impacted by higher costs for heating and transportation fuels. This has led to interest in energy audits and energy efficiency measures as well as an interest in hybrid vehicles and biodiesel for county fleets. CCAP supports programs to promote use of alternatives to fossil-based transportation fuels, including incentives for counties to deploy hybrid vehicles and vehicles operated by alternative fuels.

Water quality is an important topic, particularly for counties and municipalities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Counties and municipalities are faced with increasingly stringent water quality standards and the need to update stormwater management infrastructure and wastewater treatment systems. Although new stormwater best management practices have been developed, funding for development of stormwater

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management plans has been stagnant in the Commonwealth budget for several years, and some counties do not yet have stormwater management plans in place. The Association supports additional funding in the Commonwealth budget for Act 167 stormwater management plans.

The State Planning Board has released a report with broad-ranging implications for counties and municipalities, calling for significant changes in land use planning and provision of services, as well as municipal mergers. CCAP agrees that intergovernmental cooperation is a necessary and valuable tool, and that reducing and eliminating barriers to this type of cooperation will be beneficial. However, CCAP believes strongly that under no circumstance should intergovernmental cooperation be or become a mandate. The Association will provide additional feedback on Planning Board proposals put forward for consideration by the General Assembly.

For more information on county conservation and land use issues, contact Kristen Goshorn at 717-232-7554 x3113, or kgoshorn@pacounties.org.