

ENVIRO-NEWS BULLETIN



FROM THE DESK OF ...

REP. CAMILLE "BUD" GEORGE

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN

HOUSE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

*A Report from the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee*

AVOIDING RATE SHOCK, MARCELLUS SHALE SAFEGUARDS AMONG PRIORITIES

State Rep. Camille "Bud" George says buffering Pennsylvania from disastrous electricity costs and protecting the Commonwealth's natural resources from natural-gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation will be priorities in the new, two-year legislative session.

Rep. George, majority chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, said it is hard to name one priority because the panel faces so many critical issues.

"Addressing the rate shock that will begin hitting Pennsylvania with double-digit rate increases next year will be a prime concern," said the 18-term lawmaker from Clearfield County. "The Commonwealth cannot withstand a double-digit increase in electric costs.

"I plan to push legislation that would mitigate the looming rate increases," Rep. George said. "I also am proposing a Pennsylvania Power Authority that would purchase power for utilities so Pennsylvania is no longer gouged by the broken wholesale power market."

Rep. George said the Commonwealth also must protect its water resources, which belong to the people of Pennsylvania. He said the Marcellus Shale deposit holds enough natural gas to meet the nation's needs for an estimated 14 years.

"Pennsylvania's natural gas resources pose a tremendous opportunity to provide

energy, investment and jobs for many years to come," Rep. George said. "However, the drilling must be done prudently, and our water supplies must be protected."

Rep. George said Pennsylvania may be the only gas-rich state that does not tax the extraction of natural gas.

"Every committee will be constrained by the economic realities of the times," Rep. George said. "However, Pennsylvania shouldn't be a patsy and give a free ride for use of its water and infrastructure, especially at a time when it faces an estimated \$2 billion budget deficit.

"I believe the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee will be in the bull's eye this coming session as far as crucial legislation vital to the Commonwealth's future," Rep. George said. "Also anticipated is legislation concerning surface owners' and First Amendment rights, landfills, sludge applications, a State Energy Office, recycling and sales tax exclusions for agricultural and timber products, and byproducts used for fuel."

Besides Chairman George, Democratic committee members are: John Hornaman, secretary, Erie; Michael Gerber, Montgomery; R. Ted Harhai, Westmoreland/Fayette; John Yudichak, Luzerne; Bryan Barbin, Cambria; Michael Carroll, Luzerne/Monroe; Scott Conklin, Centre; Eugene DePasquale, York; Thomas Houghton, Chester; David Kessler, Berks; Steve

Santarsiero, Bucks; Tim Seip, Schuylkill/Berks; Greg Vitali, Delaware; and James Wansacz, Lackawanna/Luzerne/Susquehanna/Wyoming.

Republican members of the committee are: Scott Hutchinson, minority chairman, Butler/Venango; Martin Causer, Potter/McKean; Jim Christiana, Beaver; Garth Everett, Lycoming; Matthew Gabler, Elk/Clearfield; Kate Harper, Montgomery; Jeffrey Pyle, Armstrong/Indiana; Kathy Rapp, Forest/Warren/McKean; Dave Reed, Indiana; Chris Ross, Chester; and Randy Vulakovich, Allegheny.

Contact information is available online at www.pahouse.com for Democrats and www.pahousegop.com for Republicans.

State Sen. Mary Jo White returns as majority chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee. The other Republican members are Edwin Erickson, vice chairman; Lisa Baker; Elder Vogel Jr.; Donald White; and Gene Yaw.

Democratic senators on the committee are: Raphael Musto, minority chairman; Andrew Dinniman; J. Barry Stout; and Anthony Williams.

Contact information is available online at www.pasenategop.com for Senate Republicans and www.pasenate.com for Senate Democrats.

GEARING UP FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Rep. George says Pennsylvania is unveiling programs to help citizens, businesses and communities become more energy-efficient and save money.

"It's important to stay abreast of the programs available on energy, recreation and infrastructure," Rep. George said. "Besides the programs being supported by Pennsylvania's landmark \$650 million Alternative Energy Investment Act, we have the voter-approved \$400 million bond issue

for drinking water and wastewater systems and the Growing Greener fund."

Rep. George said state and federal resources to check for funding sources include:

- Department of Environmental Protection, www.depweb.state.pa.us. Click on "Grants & Loans"
- Department of Community and Economic Development, www.newPA.com

- Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, www.dcnr.state.pa.us
- Environmental Management Assistance Program, www.askemap.org
- Ben Franklin Technology Partners, www.benfranklin.org
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, www.rurdev.usda.gov
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov.

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Rep. George said a sampling of the funding initiatives include:

H2O PA GRANTS

Application Deadline: A new funding round will be announced.

Details: The H2O PA Water Supply, Sanitary Sewer and Storm Water Projects Grant program provides grants for projects that involve the acquisition, construction, improvement, expansion or rehabilitation of all or part of a water supply, sewage-disposal or flood-control/stormwater system. Construction must have begun after Jan. 1, 2007.

Grants are available for projects with a total cost of \$500,000 or more, but grants cannot exceed a total of \$20 million for any one project. Applicants must provide matching funds of at least 50 percent. A \$100 non-refundable application fee is required.

Source: More information is available at www.newpa.com. All Single Applications for Assistance for the H2O PA Water and Sewer Grant program must be filed electronically.

C2P2 GRANTS

Application Deadline: April 22 for all project types.

Details: State Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) grants can be used for a variety of programs, including community recreation, land trusts, river conservation and recreational trails. Generally, a 50 percent match is required except for small community grant types and some technical assistance grants.

Help with completing an application is available by calling (717) 787-7672.

Source: Information and applications are available at www.dcnr.state.pa.us, by clicking on the "Grants" section.

SMALL BUSINESS ENERGY EFFICIENCY GRANTS

Application Deadline: May 1 for first-round grants.

Details: The Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program provides a 25 percent match, up to \$25,000, for equipment or processes that significantly improve energy efficiency. Eligible improvements include lighting, heating, cooling, refrigeration and machinery, as well as for building insulation and weatherization projects. Eligible applicants must be independent businesses with up to 100 employees.

Projects eligible for grants must save at least 20 percent annually on energy-related expenses, with a minimum savings of \$1,000.

Source: Grant applications and guidelines are available online at www.depweb.state.pa.us, using the key words "Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant," or by e-mailing ra-sbgrants@state.pa.us.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Application Deadline: Applications for the state Renewable Energy Program must be received at least 45 days before the next scheduled Commonwealth Financing Authority meeting at which applications will be considered. An application review schedule can be found at www.newPA.com.

Details: The program makes \$25 million available to businesses, economic development organizations and political subdivisions, including school districts, to support wind and geothermal projects in Pennsylvania. It also offers incentives for companies manufacturing those technologies.

The maximum loan amount cannot exceed \$5 million. Applicants must provide evidence of at least \$1 in matching funds for every \$1 of program funds.

Source: Applicants must submit the Department of Community and Economic Development Single Application for Assistance online at www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. Inquiries should be directed by e-mail to ra-dcedcbf@state.pa.us.

NEWS 'N' NOTES

GRANT PROPOSALS SOUGHT

Ben Franklin Technology Partners is seeking applicants capable of accelerating the commercialization of promising alternative and clean energy technologies. Multiple awards of up to \$55,000 are possible. Technology-based companies with less than 500 employees in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are eligible.

More information is available online at www.benfranklin.org or by emailing Terry Singer at tsinger@benfranklin.org. Letters of intent are due on March 13; full proposals are due April 10.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Applications for the 2009 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence are now available. The award is open to any Pennsylvania business, governmental agency, educational institution, nonprofit organization, individual or farm that has developed a project that promotes environmental stewardship and economic development.

Eligible projects must have been completed between Aug. 1, 2007, and July 31, 2008. DEP will showcase the winning projects.

The deadline to submit projects for consideration is March 9. To download an application, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us and click on "2009 Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence."

COMMUNITY GRANTS

The EPA is making nearly \$3 million available in 2009 to reduce pollution at the local level through the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program. Eligible applicants include county and local governments, non-profit organizations and universities. CARE grant applications are due March 16. More information is available online at www.epa.gov/care/agreements.htm#apply.