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Green Energy Meeting June 11

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

JUNE 2009

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Green energy meeting set for June 11th

I will host an informational seminar at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 11 for residents and small business owners who are interested in securing new state funding for installing solar technology, improving their energy efficiency or constructing high performance green buildings. The seminar will be held at Coopertown Elementary School, 800 Coopertown Road, in Bryn Mawr. Reservations are not necessary.

Dan Griffiths, director of Energy Technology and Deployment at the Pennsylvania Department of

Environmental Protection, a representative from the Delaware Valley Green Building Council, and Jeff Gatter, senior vice president at AFC First Financial, will be discussing the guidelines and applications for the Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar Program, the Keystone Help Residential Energy Efficiency Program and the High Performance Green Building Program.

Please call my office at 610-789-3900 if you have any questions.

State money now available for environmentally friendly projects

Legislation passed last session has provided funding for programs which provide grants and loans to homeowners and small business owners to offset the cost of installing solar technology, making energy efficiency improvements and constructing or renovating high performance green buildings.

The Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar Program will provide \$100 million in grant funding to help fund solar projects for homeowners and small businesses in Pennsylvania. Funding will be available in the form of reimbursement grants for residential and small business projects. Grants will be awarded on a first-come basis to approved applicants.

The Keystone HELP Residential Energy Efficiency Program provides low-interest loans and rebates to Pennsylvania residents for energy efficiency improvements to their homes, including the installation of energy-efficient heating and air conditioning systems, geothermal systems, insulation and air sealing, and more. To qualify for a loan or rebate, the applicant's annual household income must be \$150,000 or less.

The Small Business Energy Efficiency Grant Program, expected to re-open in July 2009, will provide reimbursement grants to small businesses

with 100 employees or less. These grants will cover 25 percent of the eligible equipment and installation costs up to \$25,000. Eligible projects may include energy-efficient lighting, refrigeration systems, HVAC and insulation projects.

The High Performance Building Program provides grants and loan funds to residents and small businesses to underwrite costs associated with the design and construction or large renovation of high performance green buildings in the Commonwealth. The maximum grant amount is \$500,000, or 10 percent of the total eligible building costs, whichever is less. The maximum loan amount is \$2 million for small businesses and \$100,000 for residential projects. The construction project must be designed to achieve at least LEED Gold certification.

To find the complete listing of guidelines and applications for the above programs, please visit www.depweb.state.pa.us/energindependent and click on "Funding" on the left side of the page. You may also click on the green envelope icon on the left side of the Web site to register for e-mail updates. These topics will be discussed at the seminar I am hosting, as announced in this newsletter.

Havertown Superfund site receives new funds for cleanup

Haverford Township is set to receive up to \$5 million for cleanup efforts of the Havertown Superfund site. This new stream of funding comes to Pennsylvania as part of the federal American Recovery and Investment Act's appropriation of \$600 million in environmental-related stimulus dollars to 28 states.

Using this funding, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began the next phase of cleanup in May and expects to complete the work by the end of the construction season. This initiative will focus on two separate areas. The first area is the National Wood Preservers site across Eagle Road from the Philadelphia Chewing Gum factory. The second is open space behind Rittenhouse Circle near the end of Washington Avenue.

Efforts in the first area will focus on the decontamination of the groundwater. An additional deep extraction well will be placed on the site to draw contaminated groundwater to the surface for treatment. To facilitate this process, a water-based solution will be injected into the contaminated aquifer to draw the groundwater closer to the surface for extraction.

More extensive work will be done in the second area. A more than 2,500 square feet area will be excavated to remove the soil along an abandoned sewer line carrying contaminants between the two areas. The sewer will be

removed and sealed, and the entire excavation area will be filled and re-vegetated. In addition, new monitoring wells and three new extraction wells will be installed to draw shallow water from the ground to the treatment plant.

Ecological sampling will be conducted to demonstrate habitat and fish recovery. The EPA will establish controls to ensure that the environmental cleanup is not compromised.

The EPA plans to send letters addressing expectations and an offer for individual meetings, upon request, to those residents who live very close to the construction.

Also, between November and February, the EPA upgraded the pre-treatment phase of the groundwater treatment facility, doubling capacity to approximately 70 gallons per minute. This expansion is considered a long-term remedial action because the increased water benefits the upcoming initiatives at the site.

For more project details, visit www.epa.gov/reg3hscd/super/sites/PAD002338010/index.htm. Comments and questions about the Superfund project should be referred to Jill Lowe, remedial project manager at 215-814-3123 or by e-mail at lowe.jill@epa.gov.

Vitali introduces green energy bill

In January, I introduced legislation that would make Pennsylvania a leader in the fight against global warming by dramatically increasing the Commonwealth's use of renewable energy and by establishing a cutting-edge carbon capture and storage network. This legislation would also mean thousands of new jobs for Pennsylvania.

House Bill 80, and its companion bill in the Senate (S.B. 92), sponsored by Senator Ted Erickson, would require that electric companies, such as PECO, increase the share of electricity from renewable sources they provide to customers to 20 percent by 2026; increase the amount of electricity from solar photovoltaic sources to 3 percent by 2026; require electric companies to obtain at least 3 percent of the electricity they provide to customers from coal-fired plants that capture the carbon dioxide they produce; and require the Commonwealth to develop and operate a carbon dioxide capture and sequestration network. This network would consist of a storage

facility that would receive, via pipeline, carbon dioxide captured from multiple and varied sources, i.e. new coal fired power plants, retrofitted existing coal-fired power plants and large industrial emitters.

By 2030, the U.S. Department of Energy projects that the equivalent of 450 new large coal-fired power plants will be completed. Acknowledging that we will continue to burn coal for years to come, my bill seeks to provide a safe means to capture and store the carbon dioxide that will undoubtedly be emitted.

This would be the first commercial-scale, fully integrated carbon capture and sequestration network in the United States, producing thousands of new jobs for Pennsylvania in the construction and operation of these new facilities. By enacting H.B. 80 or S.B. 92, we can develop new technology to aid in the fight against global warming and boost our economy in the process.

State money secured for indoor community recreation center at Haverford Reserve

Plans for Haverford Township's indoor community recreation center at the former Haverford State Hospital site are now underway and I am attempting to secure funding for the proposed construction of this facility.

Together with state Senator Daylin Leach, I am working to acquire \$1 million in capital investment funds for this indoor project. Six architectural firms were invited to submit design and cost proposals for the indoor facility. The next step would be for the commissioners to select an architect, develop a scope of work (projecting the size and cost) and receive bids for the construction of the facility. If the Board of Commissioners makes the final decision to construct this facility, the work is expected to take 16-20 months to complete.

Indoor components would include a double gymnasium, a senior activities room, an elevated walking track, a room for community events and an environmental education area. The aquatics component will be designed as an "add alternate," to be considered in the future after discussions between the YMCA of Greater Philadelphia and Haverford Township regarding the Bubble Gum Factory site are resolved.

The outdoor component of the community park will encompass 169 acres, with a recreation area to include ball fields, walking paths, a dog park and an all-abilities playground, known as the Freedom Playground. Two multi-use fields are now completed and they are expected to be open to the public on September 1, when

the parks and walkways around the fields will also be completed. The synthetic turf field will be lit until 10 p.m. on an as-needed basis for permitted activities only. Two seeded fields will be available by fall of 2010. The South Brook Trail (located by Marple Road) is now open to the public for walking. This trail is about three-quarters of a mile round trip. The second trail, North Brook (located on the Rte. 320 side of the development), will be fully completed by the spring of 2010.

The private residences, to include 100 "duplex" carriage houses and six buildings housing 32 condominiums each, are under construction with the first building of condominiums expected to be open for buyers to move in by July 1. The on-site sales center for the carriage homes is now open.

The Community Park entrance will be located at the intersection of Darby Creek Road and Marple Road.

Join my e-mail update list

I maintain an e-mail list of constituents who wish to receive periodic e-mail updates from me about public meetings, traffic alerts, community events, state and local programs and services, and other items of interest to the community. If you would like to be added to that list, please visit my Web site at www.pahouse.com/vitali and hit the "Contact Me" tab on the left. Fill in the information and you will automatically be added to the list. You can unsubscribe at any time, if you so choose.

Seniors ride free with SEPTA ID card

Senior citizens may apply for a Senior Citizen Identification Card from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) at my district office in Havertown, an authorized transit agent.

The ID cards enable seniors to travel for FREE at any time without restriction on SEPTA buses, trolleys and subway lines. With the ID card, you are also eligible for a discounted fare of \$1.00 on SEPTA's Regional Rail lines.

You must appear in person after your 65th birthday to fill out an application with your Social Security number and one of the following forms of identification: photo driver's license, Pennsylvania non-driver photo

ID, PACE card, passport or naturalization papers, birth certificate, baptismal certificate or armed forces/separation papers from military service.

You also can obtain your ID card at the following locations:

■ The ground floor of the SEPTA Customer Service at 1234 Market Street in Philadelphia, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 215-580-7800.

■ The 69th Street Information Center at the intersection of 69th and Market Streets in Upper Darby, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call 215-580-3800 for details.

Free notary services at district office

If you are a resident of the 166th Legislative District, you can have most official documents notarized free in my district office. **Please call ahead to make sure the notary is in the office and can accommodate your type of document.** Notary work is done most weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The person whose signature is to be notarized must sign the document in person, in the presence of the notary, and provide proof of identity such as a valid driver's license, photo ID card or passport. Please let my staff know if witnesses are needed, in addition to the notary, for your documents. We also ask that residents observe a five-signature limit.

My office is on the second floor. If you are unable to climb stairs, please let us know when you call and we can arrange to have the notary meet you on the ground floor.

Renew your Do-Not-Call List registration

In 2002, Pennsylvania passed a law requiring telemarketing companies to adhere to a do-not-call list maintained by the Office of the Attorney General of Pennsylvania. The list prevents unwanted telemarketing calls that are often a nuisance and an intrusion upon privacy at home.

Registration is only valid for five years; you must re-register to continue on the list. Registration is free and is available both online and by telephone. The do-not-call hotline is 1-888-777-3406. Online information and registration can be found at www.attorneygeneral.gov/dnc.aspx.

You may check the status of your registration online at www.attorneygeneral.gov/Verification.aspx or by calling the Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Consumer Protection toll-free hotline at 1-800-441-2555.

Deadline to apply for Property Tax/Rent Rebate is June 30

Applications for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program are available in my office. The deadline to apply for the rebate is June 30. The program provides rebates of up to \$650 to qualifying homeowners and renters.

To qualify, homeowners must have a household income of \$35,000 per year or less and renters \$15,000 per year or less, be 65 or older, a widow or widower 50 or older, or 18 or older and permanently disabled. As always, only half of an applicant's Social Security or federal Railroad Retirement Tier I income is counted against the income limits.

Pennsylvania travel guide

Free copies of the 2009 Pennsylvania Travel Guide are available in my district office. This is a publication that lists hundreds of Pennsylvania attractions, accommodations and vacation ideas.

Copies can be picked up at my office, 1001 E. Darby Road, Havertown. They can also be ordered by calling 1-800-VISITPA or by visiting the Web site, www.visitpa.com.

Unclaimed property

The Pennsylvania Treasury Department currently is seeking the owners of more than \$1.5 billion in unclaimed property. Treasury also helps you recover your property free of charge.

If someone offers to help you locate your unclaimed property for a fee, call the Treasury at 1-800-222-2046.

To visit the Treasury's Web site, go to www.patreasury.org.

To check for unclaimed property in other states, visit MissingMoney.com.