

The Honorable Thomas W. Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

The pandemic has laid bare the crucial role that schools, homes, and parks and recreation centers have played in ensuring residents' mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Investing in these facilities and spaces is an investment into the survival and long-term health of the people in this Commonwealth as we fight through a third year of a global pandemic and a rapidly changing climate.

As members of the House and Senate Democratic Caucuses we urge you to make bold investments in the built environment – schools, homes, and parks and recreational centers –as part of your FY2022 – 2023 budget proposal. These investments will enhance the health and resiliency of the people of the Commonwealth as we continue to live through the challenges wrought by a global pandemic, economic inequality, and climate change.

With the knowledge that our state revenues have exceeded expectations over the past year, we specifically ask for the following to be included in your FY2022-2023 budget proposal:

Healthy Schools Funding

Direct \$1 Billion in Emergency Capital Grants to Public School Districts across the Commonwealth.

Every child across the Commonwealth has the right to a quality public education in a school that is safe, healthy, and clean. Across our state students are surrounded by lead, asbestos, mold, and rodents in their school. The unsafe conditions of public schools impact our children's' physical health, mental wellbeing, and academic achievement. Most Pennsylvania public school buildings were built between 1950 and 1959; there are more than 200 Pennsylvania public school buildings built before 1950. The systems within those buildings – heating, cooling, lighting, electrical, etc. - are broken, inefficient and in desperate need of replacement. The onset of the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated many of the existing needs within buildings, specifically around air quality and ventilation.

As part of your FY2022-2023 we ask that you direct \$1 Billion in Emergency Grants to Public School Districts with exigent health problems across the Commonwealth. School districts could use the grant funding solely for emergency repairs, such as lead and asbestos abatement or remediation, HVAC repair or replacement, electrical system repair or replacement, plumbing repair or replacement, roof and window repair or replacement and other repairs or replacements that present a health or safety issue. Districts could use the grants to install proper COVID-19 air ventilation systems.

You have been a champion for fair education funding during your administration, and securing this historic investment in our school facilities would add to that legacy.

Whole-Home Repairs

Direct \$1 Billion to a Whole-Home Repair fund to fill gaps in existing home repair programs to achieve comprehensive home repairs and weatherization.

Pennsylvanians deserve housing that is warm, safe, and dry. During the COVID-19 pandemic a home means the difference between life and death. But for thousands of Pennsylvanians, the very place they call home is unsafe. More than 280,000 occupied units in Pennsylvania have moderate to severe physical inadequacies: leaky windows, collapsing rooves, blown fuses or exposed wiring, unreliable or no heating, no working toilet or failed plumbing.

As part of your FY2022-2023 budget we ask that you direct \$1B in funding to fill critical gaps in existing programs: basic system repair funding to address deferred maintenance, support staff to help homeowners and landlords access and sequence home repair and weatherization programs, and funding to grow the necessary workforce. By building off existing federal, state, and local grant program infrastructure, we can create a comprehensive home repair program for low-income households that will keep thousands in safe housing they can afford, reduce utility bills, stabilize communities by slowing displacement and reducing crime, and create new family sustaining jobs in the process.

Repairing and improving Parks and Recreation Centers

Direct \$1 Billion in funding to parks, recreation centers, and open spaces repairs and improvements.

Our public parks and recreations centers are vital for the well-being of our constituents. Studies have shown that people located within 3 miles of a recreation center or open space are physically and emotionally healthier, are less likely to experience crime, experience increased property value and a reduction in the impacts of climate change. Recreation centers create out-of-school time activities and learning opportunities for children and youth. During the COVID-19 pandemic access to parks and open space created opportunities to socialize and recreate - both things that were crucial to maintaining mental well-being. Deferred maintenance and disinvestment from parks, recreation centers, and open spaces has left many of these spaces unusable or in disrepair.

As part of your FY2022-2023 budget we ask that you direct \$1B in funding to fund recreation center repairs and improvements to parks and open spaces throughout the Commonwealth. This can be administered through grants to municipalities and counties over several years.

In the final year of your administration, and with a budget surplus from excess revenues, now is the time for bold, generational investments in our built environment. We ask that you include these demands in your budget address and that you fight alongside of us over the next few months to deliver these victories for the people of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Fiedler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Elizabeth Fiedler



Ben Sanchez



Rick Krajewski



Jessica Benham



Nancy Guenst



Tina Davis



Danielle Friel-Otten



Mike Zabel

Mary Jo Daley

Mary Jo Daley

Kevin J. Boyle

Kevin Boyle

Perry Warren

Perry Warren

Peter Schweyer

Peter Schweyer

Carol Hill-Evans

Carol Hill-Evans

Thom Welby

Thom Welby