



1713 S. Broad St. #54807
Philadelphia, PA 19148
Phone (215) 732-5897
www.PennEnvironmentCenter.org

Dear State leaders,

When passed in 1988, Pennsylvania's landmark recycling law known as "Act 101" was considered a national model for addressing statewide solid waste challenges. But as the law prepares to celebrate its 35th anniversary, it is clear that Act 101 is outdated and hasn't kept up with our modern consumption and disposal. **For this reason, we call on our elected officials to update and improve our waste systems.**

[A recent report](#) by the PennEnvironment Research & Policy Center and the Pennsylvania Resources Council uncovered many of the weaknesses and outdated policies within Act 101 that require improvement. While Act 101 created the necessary foundation for the Commonwealth to kick-start recycling, the report finds that the law is inadequate today. Key challenges include: recycling requirements differ across municipalities, which impedes the benefits of strong recycling and waste diversion; waste generation has grown by 45% between 1990 and 2018; new products are being made that have no good end use plans, such as single-use plastics and e-waste; and recycling funding has essentially been stagnant, which is leading to cities cutting the types and amounts of recycling that they collect. **In order to bring Act 101 and our waste system into the 21st century, we recommend the following:**

1. Require recycling and modern solid waste programs in all Pennsylvania communities. Currently, only 475 Pennsylvania municipalities (25%) are required to offer curbside recycling under Act 101. This leaves swathes of the Commonwealth without access to basic recycling. We need to ensure the remaining 1,520 Pennsylvania municipalities that currently don't have to meet recycling standards under Act 101 are brought into the fold--and receive the financial assistance to do so.
2. Ensure that all of the common materials that are part of our waste stream in our day-to-day lives, such as cardboard, paper, glass bottles, aluminum and steel cans, and single-use plastics, are required to be collected by local recycling programs and curbside recycling efforts. Right now, the municipalities mandated to provide recycling are only required to collect only three out of eight commonly used materials (aluminum cans, steel/tin cans, 3 types of plastic, newsprint, corrugated paper, and clear, brown and green glass). This leaves valuable recyclables going to landfills or incinerators and makes it difficult to coordinate recycling education and messaging across the whole Commonwealth.
3. Properly fund our recycling programs. Funding for recycling has essentially flatlined since the passage of Act 101 in 1988. We need to properly fund our recycling programs to ensure their success, and we should ensure that the producers pay for the waste they produce. This could include revenue generation through increased fees on trash for in-state and out-of-state waste, or through producer responsibility fees like a statewide bottle deposit program.

4. We need comprehensive programs for composting (to deal with our largest source of waste: organics), for e-waste (our fastest growing and a highly-toxic part of the waste stream), and the pervasive pollution from single-use plastics that's plaguing the planet.

At the same time, enhancing Pennsylvania's recycling and solid waste efforts would have numerous benefits for the Commonwealth. **Recycling is already a \$22.6 billion industry that employs over 66,000 people statewide while reducing our carbon footprint equal to taking 2 million cars off the road each year.** By modernizing and improving our recycling efforts, we can expand upon these benefits.

Pennsylvania can be a leader in recycling by modernizing the policy that positioned us as champions so long ago. For our health, environment, and the economy, we must recommit to reducing, reusing, and recycling across our commonwealth.

Environmental and Community Organizations

David Masur, PennEnvironment;

Darren Spielman, Pennsylvania Resources Council;

Peter Crownfield, Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley;

Matthew Mehalik, Breathe Project;

Patricia M. DeMarco, Chatham University;

Sandy Field, Climate Reality Project;

William Kern, Countryside Conservancy;

Lauren Gogal, Crooked Creek Watershed Association;

Steven Richard, Genesee Headwaters Watershed Association;

Victoria Laibach, Green Valleys Watershed Association;

Amy Bruckner, Guardians of the Brandywine;

Tracy Lira, H-CAN - Havertown-Area Community Action Network;

Bernie McGurl, Lackawanna River Corridor Association;

Kathy Cook, League of Women Voters Pennsylvania;

Eric Skrivseth, Moshannon Creek Watershed Association;

Ashley Funk, Mountain Watershed Association;

Phyllis Blumberg, PA- Jewish Earth Alliance;

Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches;

Chris Mendel, Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust;

Gloria Gilman, Philly Neighborhood Networks;

María A Galarza, Phoenixville Area Transition;

Susan Murawski, Presque Isle Audubon;

Daniel Rossi-Keen, PhD, RiverWise;

Rail Pollution Protection Pittsburgh (RP3), RP3;

William Reichert, Schuylkill Headwaters Association;

Steven Renosky, Yellow Creek Trout Club Inc.

Local Officials and Solid Waste Leaders

Anita Prizio, Allegheny County Council;

Jennifer Kovacs, Bedford County Conservation District;

Daniel McKelvey, Bellevue Borough Council;

Jeff Stuncard, Bellevue Borough Council;

Kara Roggenkamp, Ben Avon Borough Council;

Heth R. Turnquist, Borough of Aspinwall;

Yaniv Aronson, Mayor, Borough of Conshohocken;

Markus E. Adams, Borough of East Pittsburgh;

Lloyd Cunningham, Borough of Homestead;

Stephanie Henrick, Mayor, Borough of Pottstown;

Stephen Thomas, Brentwood Council;

Andrea Strout, Buckingham EAC;

Kris Howdyshell, Cambria County Solid Waste Authority;

Boris Kerzner, Cheltenham Township Environmental Advisory Council;

Deb Klein, Churchill Borough Council;

Paige G. Cagnetti, Mayor, City of Scranton;

Kirsten R Compitello, Crafton Borough;

John Oliverio, Crafton Borough;

Connie Butler, Delaware County Solid Waste Authority;

Jeannine Mitchell, Doylestown Township EAC;

Anne Woodbury, Doylestown Township EAC;

Heidi Shiver, Doylestown Township EAC Vice-Chair;

James S Baldassarre, Doylestown Township EAC;

Tara Yaney, Edgewood Borough Council;

Moshe Sherman, Edgewood Borough, Council Member;

Angelo Baiocchi, Forest Hills Borough;

Jonathan Neumann, Indiana Township Board of Supervisors;

Daniel Peluso, Leet Township commissioner;

Erika Strassburger, Pittsburgh City Council;

Brittany Reno, Mayor, Sharpsburg Borough;

Cheryl McDermott, Stowe Township Commissioner;

Wanda Shirk, Susquehannock Trail Club;

Trish Hredzak, Verona Borough;

Charles Dizard, vice president, Harrison Township Board of Commissioners;

Austin McDaniel, Washington County;

Jason E. Theakston, Washington County Planning Commission;

Richard Cole, West Norriton EAC