



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS UPDATE

From Milliron & Goodman Government Relations, LLC.

200 North 3rd Street ♦ Suite 1500 ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17101 ♦ Phone: 717-232-5322 ♦ Erik A. Ross, Senior Associate ♦ www.millirongoodman.com

Harrisburg, PA

Erik@millirongoodman.com

March 15, 2021 -- Issue 1224

Wolf Administration Promotes Free Testing for Lead in Drinking Water for Schools and Child Care Programs

On March 9, 2021, the Wolf Administration advised all schools and child care programs in Pennsylvania of the Voluntary Lead in Child Care and School Drinking Water Testing Program, which will provide \$1.74 million from a federal grant for testing lead in drinking water.

Governor Tom Wolf first announced the funding from the **Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act in February 2020** <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/gov-wolf-announces-1-7-million-for-safer-water-in-schools-and-child-care-centers/> as another component of his Lead-Free Pennsylvania plan to address lead across the commonwealth. Earlier this week, the departments of Education and Human Services sent direct communications to eligible facilities to advise them of the availability of funding and how to access it.

"Testing the water of thousands of child care centers and schools will give us a benchmark of the work we need to do next for removing lead from water and protecting our children," Gov. Wolf said.

The Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST) launched the Pennsylvania Voluntary Lead in Child Care and School Drinking Water Testing Program at leadfree.pa.gov. Eligible schools and child cares can receive free water lead testing and related training and technical support.

Gov. Wolf's Lead-Free PA initiative was **announced in August 2019**

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/gov-wolf-discusses-initiative-for-a-lead-free-pennsylvania-with-focus-on-testing-and-abatement/> to create a lead-free Pennsylvania by calling on the legislature to increase access to blood testing for children in alignment with federal guidelines, increasing local response efforts, and planning for training of more certified lead abatement professionals.

That announcement was billed as "just the start" of a plan for a lead-free Pennsylvania and today's communications to schools and child care facilities is a continuation of the governor's plan.

The grant comes through the EPA's Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, specifically Section 1459B of the Safe Drinking Water Act, which authorizes grant funding for reducing lead in drinking water. The EPA funding will cover 100 percent of the cost of water testing; however, the governor recently urged the legislature to take action to provide subsequent remediation funding by amending the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) to allow for abatement of hazardous substances like lead and asbestos in schools.

Funding for abatement is essential for schools and child care facilities that discover lead in their drinking water through the use of this program.

"To build a better, healthier Pennsylvania, we need to know the extent of problems such as lead in drinking water, so it is tremendous to see these grants now available," Gov. Wolf said. "I encourage our child care centers and schools to avail themselves of this free program."

Find more information on the program and how to enroll, go to www.leadfree.pa.gov.

Source: Governor Wolf Press Release, 3/9/2021

Wolf Administration Announces Equity Principles to Guide Investments Through Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has announced a set of guiding equity principles to help inform the public on the implementation of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and investments of the program's proceeds. DEP has also partnered with the Delta Institute to engage with impacted communities and workers to identify ways to ensure a just and equitable transition for all Pennsylvania residents.

"Throughout the process of developing the regulation to take part in RGGI we have heard from stakeholders that there must be guidelines in place to ensure that the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians are not put at further risk," said DEP Secretary Patrick McDonnell. "Confronting the threat of climate change cannot come at the expense of vulnerable communities, and these principles will guide us in finalizing the RGGI regulation and associated community investments."

The RGGI Equity Principles include:

- Inclusively gathering and considering input from the public, especially **environmental justice communities** <https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/default.aspx>, related to decisions made under RGGI;
- Protecting public health and welfare, mitigating any adverse impacts on human health, especially in environmental justice communities, and seeking to ensure environmental and structural racism are not replicated in the engagement process; and
- Working equitably and with intentional consideration to distribute environmental and economic benefits of the proceeds of allowance auctions.

"These principles will help guide the development of the final RGGI regulation, and how the investments of the revenue from the allowance auctions will be made," said McDonnell.

DEP's contract with the Delta Institute will result in the development of a plan to invest RGGI auction proceeds in a way that diversifies Pennsylvania's economy and assists communities that are affected by changes in the energy sector.

"The core of the work with the Delta Institute includes engaging directly with communities so that the RGGI investment plan is not a top-down directive from afar," said McDonnell. "We know that change is coming to the energy industry with or without RGGI and we need to be thinking of what kind of investments need to be made to keep Pennsylvania communities vibrant into the future."

Governor Tom Wolf has proposed investments of RGGI revenues into a new Energy Communities Trust Fund to provide direct support for workers in communities that are affected by participating in RGGI and to improve and diversify local economies.

The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) accepted comments on the draft RGGI proposal for more than two months and held 10 virtual public hearings, getting feedback from more than 14,000 Pennsylvanians. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DEP hosted virtual public hearings, which allowed

more than 400 Pennsylvanians to present their comments verbally.

"We have received dramatic feedback from Pennsylvanians: they want us to participate in RGGI now as a tangible step we can take to fight climate change," said McDonnell. "We can do that and invest in our communities at the same time, and continue building a strong economy for the future."

Now that the public comment period has closed, the next steps for the regulation will be for DEP to review the comments received and incorporate them into the final regulatory language. Near-final language will be shared with the Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee, Citizen's Advisory Council, and Small Business Advisory Committee in the spring for feedback. The final regulation will be presented to the Environmental Quality Board later in the summer.

More information can be found at www.dep.pa.gov/rggi.

Source: DEP Press Release, 3/10/2021

Virtual PUC Damage Prevention Committee Meeting on March 16

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) will hold a virtual meeting of the Damage Prevention Committee (DPC) on Tuesday, March 16, at 9 a.m.

Members of the public, the media and others will be able to access the virtual conference by clicking on this Microsoft Teams

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjFkZWExN2EtYmJhMi00NmI2LWI3YmItN2ZhN2U0YTQyZWQ0%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2266b01118-9010-4670-b905-5f1f3ebc829b%22%7d event link or by calling into the telephone conference by dialing 267-332-8737, and then entering passcode 364 708 79# to listen to the meeting. The **meeting agenda**

https://www.puc.pa.gov/media/1356/dpc_agenda_031621.pdf is available on the PUC's website.

About the DPC

The DPC is a peer-based group of 13 representatives, nominated by their industry or affiliated organization and appointed by the PUC. Creation of the committee was authorized by Act 50 of 2017, which enhances Pennsylvania's Underground Utility Line Protection Act - also known as the "One Call Law." The focus of the DPC is to reduce the number of "hits" on underground lines and utilities.

The DPC meets regularly to review alleged violations of Act 50 and make informal determinations as to the appropriate response including, but not limited to, the issuance of warning letters, mandatory training programs and/or administrative penalties. **Summaries of actions** <https://www.puc.pa.gov/pipeline/pa-one-call/> taken at monthly DPC meetings are available on the PUC's website.

Digging Safety - PA One Call

Every year, underground lines across the state are struck more than 6,000 times - which means that during the average workday a pipeline or other vital utility system is hit every 20 minutes. While underground lines are often "out of sight and out of mind," every hit poses a risk to the contractors and homeowners who are doing the digging; to utility workers and emergency responders who are mobilized when lines are struck; and to bystanders who live, work or travel near the locations of the incidents.

State law requires contractors and residents to contact **PA One Call** <https://www.paconeocall.org/> at least three business days prior to excavation - triggering alerts to all utilities within an intended digging area and prompting utilities to mark where their facilities are located. Pennsylvanians can dial 8-1-1 to connect with the One Call system, while out-of-state residents or businesses can call 1-800-242-1776.

About the Bureau of Investigation & Enforcement

As the independent investigation and enforcement bureau of the PUC, I&E enforces state and federal pipeline safety, electric safety and motor carrier safety laws and regulations and represents the public interest in ratemaking and service matters before the PUC's Office of Administrative Law Judge. I&E has the authority to bring enforcement action, seek emergency orders from the Commission or take other steps to ensure public safety.

Source: PUC Press Release, 3/10/2021

Next DRBC Water Quality Advisory Committee Meeting: Thursday, April 15

The next meeting of DRBC's Water Quality Advisory Committee will take place remotely on Thursday, April 15, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

- To Join:
https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://zoom.us/j/92370127890?pwd=bEt5QUo2Vm9CWmlBaUF0Z2I3ZmRqQT09;!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!d2dSKY4Ld9lArYusiv9IIn_v3rYr8mbUl5Ivm39BK
[A7JNkVAF-qDz94Qi_dt-0-tVUVEZ9zbBHnwnTKbCqM1\\$](https://A7JNkVAF-qDz94Qi_dt-0-tVUVEZ9zbBHnwnTKbCqM1$)
- Meeting ID: 923 7012 7890
- Passcode: 853386
- You can also dial in using your phone: +1 (929) 205-6099 (same meeting id/passcode as above)

An agenda will be shared closer to the meeting date.

Please contact John Yagecic
john.yagecic@drbc.gov, with any questions.

Source: DRBC, 3/11/2021

Governor Wolf Commits to Phasing Out Gas Tax, Announces Commission to Develop Funding Solutions

On March 12, 2021, Governor Tom Wolf reiterated his commitment to phase out Pennsylvania's gas tax, which is becoming an unreliable source for funding Pennsylvania's vast transportation network. To make this possible and to further address the state's transportation funding needs, the governor has also signed an **Executive Order** <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EO-21-02.pdf> establishing the Transportation Revenue Options Commission, which will develop comprehensive funding recommendations for Pennsylvania's large and aging infrastructure.

"Our economy, our communities, and our future rely on a strong transportation system that supports our safety and growth. We have more than \$9 billion in annual unmet needs across our state-maintained transportation system alone. At the same time, Pennsylvania is relying too much on outdated, unreliable funding methods, and the federal government hasn't taken meaningful action in decades," Gov. Wolf said. "Phasing out the burdensome gas tax, coupled with seeking long-term reliable funding solutions that will keep pace with our infrastructure needs, deserves a close examination. Forming this bipartisan commission will bring multiple, bipartisan voices to the table to ensure that we can examine reliable, sustainable revenue solutions to address both near-term and long-term funding needs."

Pennsylvania has one of the largest state-owned transportation networks in the country, with nearly 40,000 miles of roads and over 25,400 bridges under its direct purview. PennDOT also oversees aviation, rail freight, public transportation, ports, pedestrian and bicycle programs.

In 2019, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) identified major risks to transportation funding such as reduced fuel revenues, unpredictable federal funding, and legislative changes to reduce commitments.

PennDOT's latest assessment places the annual gap of its needs in all modes and facilities at \$9.3 billion, growing to an annual \$14.5 billion gap by 2030.

Further, as more fuel-efficient cars and technologies are created, reliance on the gas tax for state revenue is less and less dependable. Any phase out of the gas tax will need to be coupled with new or replacement revenue.

The Transportation Revenue Options Commission is comprised of transportation, economic, and community stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including majority and minority leaders from the House and Senate Transportation and Appropriations committees. PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian will serve as commission chair. The commission will have its first meeting by March 25 and a report of commission activities and funding options will be submitted to the Governor before Aug. 1, 2021.

The following individuals were invited to join the commission, with additional representatives from transportation's varied stakeholders to be invited before the first meeting:

- Rep. Stan Saylor, Chair, House Appropriations Committee;
- Rep. Matthew Bradford, Minority Chair, House Appropriations Committee;
- Sen. Pat Browne, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee;
- Sen. Vincent Hughes, Minority Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee;
- Sen. Wayne Langerholc, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee;
- Sen. John Sabatina, Minority Chair, Senate Transportation Committee;
- Rep. Tim Hennessey, Chair, House Transportation Committee;
- Rep. Mike Carroll, Minority Chair, House Transportation Committee;
- Gene Barr, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry;
- Carl Belke, Keystone State Railroad Association (KSRRRA);
- Becky Bradley, Lehigh Valley Planning Commission;
- Sarah Clark Stuart, Pennsylvania Pedalcycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee;
- Howard Cohen, Temple University, Public-Private Transportation Partnerships Board;

- Mark Compton, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission;
- Patricia Cowley, Pennsylvania Bus Association;
- Secretary Dennis Davin, Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development;
- Ronald Drnevich, State Transportation Commission;
- Secretary Cindy Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources;
- Colonel Robert Evanchick, Pennsylvania State Police;
- Rich Fitzgerald; Allegheny County Executive;
- James Harper Jr., Laborers' International Union of North America;
- Katherine Kelleman, Port Authority of Allegheny County;
- Amy Kessler, North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission;
- James Kunz, International Union of Operating Engineers;
- Mike Glezer, Wagman;
- Jeffrey L. Iseman, Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council;
- Robert Latham, Associated Pennsylvania Constructors;
- Brock Myers, Alan Myers;
- Secretary Patrick McDonnell, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection;
- Rebecca Oyler, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association;
- Secretary Russell Redding, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture;
- Leslie Richards, Southeastern Public Transit Authority;
- Shawna Russell, Pennsylvania Public Transportation Association;
- Dave Sanko, Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors;
- Bob Shaffer, Aviation Advisory Committee;
- Leeann Sherman, American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania;
- Karl Singleton, Pennsylvania Diversity Coalition;
- Secretary Jen Swails, Office of Budget;
- Andrew Swank, Swank Construction;

- Jerry Sweeney, Southeast Partnership for Mobility;
- Secretary Robert Torres, Pennsylvania Department of Aging; and,
- George Wolff, Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition.

"I am grateful to all the commission members for contributing their time and expertise to this critical issue," said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian "We must work together to find sustainable, future-focused funding solutions that will keep Pennsylvanians moving." For more information about transportation funding in Pennsylvania, visit <https://www.penndot.gov/funding>.

Source: PennDOT Press Release, 3/12/2021

Wolf Administration Announces Second Round of Statewide PFAS Sampling Results

65 percent of sites sampled did not detect any PFAS, none of the sites were above federal limits

As a result of Governor Tom Wolf's **executive order to address Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances** https://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/My-Water/drinking_water/PFAS/Pages/default.aspx (PFAS) in drinking water, the Wolf Administration today provided an update on the actions taken on this emerging environmental issue and released the results of the second round of drinking water samples.

"In the interest of public and environmental safety, we are continuing to make strides to ensure that we can determine PFAS contamination levels in Pennsylvania. Although COVID-19 has impacted us all, it has not prevented us from making progress," said Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell.

In the latest round of public water system sampling conducted by DEP, **PFAS were not**

detected in 65% of the 114 sites sampled. Of the sites with detections, seven PFAS were detected.

The seven PFAS that were detected are:

Perfluorobutane sulfonate (PFBS), Perfluoroheptanoic acid (PFHpA), Perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS), Perfluorohexanoic acid (PFHxA), Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), Perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

None of the results are above the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Health Advisory Level (HAL) of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) for the combined concentrations of PFOS and PFOA.

Results were non-detect for the other 11 PFAS that were tested. These 11 PFAS are: 11-chloroeicosfluoro-3-oxaundecane-1-sulfonic acid (11Cl-PF3OUdS), 9-chlorohexadecafluoro-3-oxanone-1-fulfonic acid (9Cl-PF3ONS), 4,8-dioxa-3H-perfluorononanoic acid (ADONA), Hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA), N-ethyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic acid (NEtFOSAA), N-methyl perfluorooctanesulfonamidoacetic acid (NMeFOSAA), Perfluorodecanoic acid (PFDA), Perfluorododecanoic acid (PFDoA), Perfluorotetradecanoic acid (PFTA), Perfluorotridecanoic acid (PFTrDA), and Perfluoroundecanoic acid (PFUnA).

The statewide public water system sampling plan began in June 2019. Samples collected by DEP were analyzed by an accredited laboratory for six PFAS chemicals: PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, PFHxS, PFHpA, and PFBS.

Sampling was temporarily suspended from March 2020 to July 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting business closures and travel restrictions established under the Governor's Emergency Declaration. Sampling resumed in August 2020 under an approved health and safety plan.

DEP expects that sample collection activities will be completed by the end of March 2021.

For the sampling conducted in 2020, the analysis method used was changed from EPA Method 537, which detects only six PFAS, to EPA Method 537.1, which can detect 18 PFAS. This change was made to obtain additional occurrence data, so samples were recollected from all of the facilities that were sampled in 2019.

DEP has identified 493 public water system sources as potential sampling sites because they meet the criterion of being located within a half mile of a potential source of PFAS contamination, such as military bases, fire training sites, landfills, and manufacturing facilities. Of those 493 potential sampling sites, DEP's public water system sampling plan will ultimately test approximately 360 sources of public drinking water for PFAS contamination. DEP will also test approximately 40 public drinking water sources that are not located within a half mile of a potential source of PFAS contamination to establish a baseline.

In September 2018, the governor signed an **executive order** <https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/executive-order-2018-08-perfluoroalkyl-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-action-team/> establishing the PFAS Action Team, moving Pennsylvania to the forefront of states taking proactive steps to address PFAS and other contaminants.

Led by the Action Team, the administration has taken steps to identify and address contamination and establish a cleanup plan to address PFAS contamination, including:

- Beginning the process of setting a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for PFAS. This will mark the first time that DEP has set an MCL rather than adopting standards set by the federal government, as it has with all other regulated drinking water contaminants;
- Hiring toxicologists at the Department of Health and contracting for additional toxicologist services to move forward with setting a state limit for PFAS in drinking water;
- Taking steps to address remediation of the chemicals by working to change

groundwater and soil remediation standards for three PFAS compounds;

- Taking steps to assist communities and private well owners with PFAS contamination above the EPA's HAL for PFOS and PFOA of 70 ppt;
- Developing uniform, science-based operating procedures to guide the identification and assessment of commercial and industrial properties that have contaminated private and/or public drinking water sources;
- Approving more than \$20 million in grants to address PFAS groundwater contamination; and
- Testing all water supplies to Pennsylvania Army National Guard facilities and state-owned homes for veterans for PFAS - while all sample results returned with non-detectable levels of PFAS, the water wells will continue to be monitored.

Source: DEP Press Release, 3/12/2021

Gov. Wolf and COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Announce Targeted Vaccination Strategies

Commitment to Appointments for Seniors, Support of Frontline Workers, A Plan for a Path Forward

On March 12, 2021, Governor Tom Wolf and members of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force announced another bi-partisan effort to complete COVID phase 1A vaccinations first, set up mass vaccination clinics with regionally supplied plans to inform allocations, and vaccinate frontline workers.

“The efforts of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force are making significant headway in getting more people vaccinated,” Gov. Wolf said. “The special initiative the Task Force agreed on last week

to vaccinate educators, school staff, and early childhood educators is well underway, and we are making incredible progress vaccinating Pennsylvanians eligible in Phase 1A. These new initiatives will move us even further in the state's vaccine rollout.

"Last night, President Joe Biden laid out a bold plan for our country with a goal of making every American adult eligible to receive a vaccine by May 1. My administration is taking aggressive steps to meet that timeline, and we are fortunate to have the leadership and partnership of President Biden and his administration as we work to protect the people of Pennsylvania."

Gov. Wolf outlined the key, significant progress the state is making in rolling out vaccine. Last month, the Acting Secretary of Health issued an [order](https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/health-details.aspx?newsid=1292) <https://www.media.pa.gov/pages/health-details.aspx?newsid=1292> directing vaccine providers' administration of COVID-19 vaccines to ensure that Pennsylvanians are vaccinated as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Since that order, the state's hospital systems now have enough vaccine to partner with counties to create county vaccination sites, and the state has seen impressive improvements in its vaccine infrastructure and administration rates. Over the past month county vaccination rates are climbing, and many, including Westmoreland County and all collar counties in the Southeast, are at or above the statewide rate of 15 percent. Montgomery County is 5 percentage points above the statewide average for vaccination rates.

Nearly 1 million Pennsylvanians over 65 have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and more than 72,000 people are being vaccinated every single day in Pennsylvania.

And, as President Biden mentioned last night, the state has been working with the federal government to set up 27 federal vaccine program sites in the commonwealth. Four of those sites are already participating in that program: three in Philadelphia and one in Lycoming County.

Today's announcement of plans by the task force focus includes three key areas that augment the significant progress already made:

- Scheduling vaccine appointments for those in Phase 1A who are still seeking a vaccination. To date nearly 1 million Pennsylvanians age 65 and older have received a first dose of vaccine. The number of Phase 1A eligible Pennsylvanians with a first dose now tops 3 million. More than 72,000 Pennsylvanians are being vaccinated every day.

"Our 1A population contains some of the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians, and it is crucial that these individuals get vaccinated as quickly as possible," Wolf said. "The Secretary of Health will also be issuing an Order that will require vaccine providers to make best efforts to schedule all 1A appointments by the end of the month. To assist them in achieving this goal, we will be providing greater visibility into their future allocations. This will allow them to schedule appointments with confidence in having sufficient supply to keep those appointments."

- Establishing Regional Vaccination Clinics using a portion of the weekly allocation of Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses after the completion of the special initiative to vaccinate teachers, school staff and child care workers. This will be made available to regions and counties throughout the commonwealth.

Counties will be encouraged to work within their region to submit a proposal for a mass vaccination clinic, community vaccination clinics, mobile clinics or other strategy to vaccinate their region's currently eligible individuals. The Task Force will review proposals and determine those that best demonstrate an ability to support a mass vaccination clinic.

"We know that county leaders and emergency management organizations have been working hard to put plans in place and make preparations for vaccination sites in their communities," Gov. Wolf said. "We will be working closely with the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania to create plans for these regional vaccine clinics."

- Targeting frontline workers and first responders using a portion of J&J doses. Targeted industries include law enforcement/correctional staff, grocery workers, firefighters (both career and volunteer), meat processing and agriculture workers.

“Our goal in establishing special vaccination initiatives is to help protect frontline, essential workers and their communities,” Gov. Wolf said. “These are the Pennsylvanians who have had no choice but to continue serving our commonwealth during this pandemic. These workers, their families, and entire communities will be safer if they are vaccinated as quickly as possible.”

Using the J&J supply to support regionally planned and facilitated mass vaccination sites, as well as quickly completing vaccine missions for critical frontline workers means more shots in arms while helping our seniors secure appointments and receive their vaccine before more broadly opening up to additional populations.

“This commitment today from the Administration will allow Pennsylvania to quickly achieve herd immunity, reopen our economy, and return to regular life,” said Sen. Ryan Aument.

“We are committed to vaccinating our neighbors who are seniors in the next few weeks,” Sen. Art Haywood said. “Plus, we are taking a big step to vaccinate black, brown and white people in frontline jobs. The end is in sight.”

“Last week, we as a taskforce announced a special initiative that prioritized the health and safety of our teachers and our students across the commonwealth,” said Rep. Bridget Malloy Kosierowski. “By securing and allocating the 94,600 doses of Johnson & Johnson Vaccines, educators, school staff, and early childhood educators across Pennsylvania are currently being vaccinated-paving a way to get our children safely back into the classrooms.

“With 200,000 J&J weekly doses coming to Pennsylvania starting the week of March 28 and our supply of Moderna and Pfizer continuing to increase weekly, today’s announcement is another special initiative that again is a step in the right

direction to not only protect our most vulnerable population but also speed up our vaccine rollout. Through the regional vaccination clinics, we will achieve greater access for seniors who have been struggling to find available doses and a more equitable distribution by allowing communities to direct doses to their most vulnerable residents and in April we will also be able to target our frontline, essential workers who have had no choice but to continue serving our commonwealth amidst this pandemic.”

“While it has been a bumpy road for the Commonwealth with its vaccine administration rollout, I’m confident we are now on the right path,” said Rep. Tim O’Neal. “I know concerns still exist surrounding vaccine supply and distribution, but today’s announcement is another important step forward. I’m pleased we have made enough substantial progress with getting those in Group 1A vaccinated that our essential workers and first responders will soon be able to get the vaccine.”

Gov. Wolf explained that the Task Force is still working through the details of these next special initiatives and will announce more information before additional Johnson & Johnson allocations become available on March 28.

“We have work to do to get the infrastructure in place to vaccinate these populations, which is why we’re starting the process now,” Gov. Wolf said. “We should all be excited about the fact that our vaccine allocations are increasing.”

“Thanks to the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force legislative members for their partnership in addressing the challenges of the vaccine rollout and thanks to the many vaccine providers across the commonwealth. Without the efforts of on-the-ground vaccine providers, none of this would be possible.”

Source: Governor Wolf’s Press Office, 3/12/2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force Announces

Subcommittees Focused on Key Audiences and Issues

Governor Tom Wolf announced the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force less than one month ago

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/wolf-administration-announces-creation-of-covid-19-vaccine-joint-task-force-with-legislature/>. Since that time, the task force and Wolf Administration have accomplished bi-partisan initiatives to help advance the state's vaccination rollout and COVID fight.

Last week, the task force announced a special initiative to vaccinate teachers, school staff and child care workers, helping to get children back in the classroom and further protecting our educators and communities.

Most recently, the task force announced the formation of subcommittees focused on key issues and audiences, bringing more voices to the table to aid in representing all Pennsylvanians.

Subcommittee members represent stakeholders and advocates, state agencies, workers, academics, industry, and other interested parties. The overriding purpose of all subcommittees is collaboration and stakeholder input through productive conversation.

Subcommittees include:

Aging

As Pennsylvania continues to implement the Interim Vaccination Plan, which prioritizes those 65 and older and individuals living in long term care facilities, the legislature and advocates have raised concerns related to access to vaccine for seniors. This subcommittee will augment steps already taken to alleviate concerns by highlighting local efforts and creating this centralized forum for advocates on these issues.

Racial Equity

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found "long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from

racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19."

The Department of Health (DOH) has worked throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to address these disparities, but community partnerships and leadership from trusted messengers is critical in addressing racial inequities.

This subcommittee will help with messaging of current efforts to advocates and stakeholders, lift issues for the consideration of the administration and the legislature and provide more public input into the current vaccine rollout process.

Business/Workforce

The legislature and advocates have raised concerns related to the economic impacts on both employees and employers resulting from limited vaccine availability.

This subcommittee will help with messaging of current efforts to advocates and stakeholders, lift issues for the consideration of the administration and the legislature and provide more public input into the current vaccine rollout process.

Education

Amid concerns related to access of vaccine for educators, the Task Force recommended and is moving forward with vaccinating teachers, school staff and child care workers. This subcommittee will evaluate how this initiative is working and provide an ongoing forum for the education community to share concerns and successes.

"The productive and focused working relationship with our legislators is delivering successes toward vaccinating more and more Pennsylvanians," Gov. Wolf said. "To hear even more voices and feedback from stakeholders and communities is why the task force developed these subcommittees focused on key audiences with their own unique needs and challenges. I look forward to seeing the results of the subcommittee meetings, which are already taking place."

Members of the task force include co-chairs Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam and

Director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Randy Padfield; for the Senate Democratic Caucus, Sen. Art Haywood; for the House Democratic Caucus, Rep. Bridget Kosierowski; for the Senate Republican Caucus, Sen. Ryan Aument; and for the House Republican Caucus, Rep. Tim O’Neal.

Task force members represent their caucus’s point-of-view and work to streamline conversations to focus and drive issues of importance. Wolf Administration members will serve as task force members with the subject matter expertise to listen, collaborate and provide information, answers and suggestions to solve problems in a timely manner. The task force has been meeting at least twice weekly to advance initiatives, listen and recommend plans and programs. Subcommittees are or will meet at least weekly.

Source: Governor Wolf’s Press Office, 3/12/2021

Pennsylvania’s Unemployment Rate at 7.3 Percent in January Total Nonfarm Jobs Increase 35,700

On March 12, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) released its employment situation report for January 2021.

Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points over the month to 7.3 percent in January. The U.S. rate fell four-tenths of a percentage point from December to 6.3 percent. The commonwealth’s unemployment rate was 2.5 percentage points above its January 2020 level while the national rate was up 2.8 points over the year.

Pennsylvania’s civilian labor force – the estimated number of residents working or looking for work – decreased 15,000 over the month.

Pennsylvania’s total nonfarm jobs were up 35,700 over the month to 5,638,100 in January,

essentially reversing December’s drop of 35,400. Jobs increased in 4 of the 11 industry supersectors with the largest volume gain in professional & business services (+12,100).

Additional information is available on the L&I website at www.dli.pa.gov.

Notes: The above data are seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data provide the most valid month-to-month comparison.

Because the data included in each month’s press release (primarily civilian labor force and nonfarm jobs data) are sample based, the data are subject to revisions. Once each year, estimates are adjusted to new levels based on additional or revised information collected after the initial release of the data (called a benchmark). Additionally, seasonal adjustment factors for historical labor force and nonfarm jobs data are updated each year. Revisions to the statewide labor force and nonfarm jobs series through 2020 have been completed and are reflected in this January news release. For a complete set of benchmarked data, visit www.workstats.dli.pa.gov.

Source: Department of Labor & Industry, 3/12/2021

PUC Recognizes ‘Fix a Leak Week;’ Highlights Importance of Safe Drinking Water, Efficiency and Conservation

On March 11, 2021, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) highlighted the importance of water, including its safety, efficiency and conservation efforts in conjunction with National “Fix a Leak Week,” which is March 15-21, 2021.

The annual Fix a Leak campaign <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week> challenges households across the country to check their fixtures for leaks and consider the environmental and economic impact of wasted water.

“It is important to increase awareness and understanding about the issues surrounding the use of water,” said Ralph Yanora, PUC Commissioner and member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Committee on Water during the Public Meeting of March 11. “During this upcoming week, households across the country are encouraged to check their fixtures for leaks, since a little leak does make a big difference.”

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <https://www.epa.gov/watersense>, an estimated 10% of all homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day, and the average household leaks can waste more than 10,000 gallons of water every year. Leaks nationwide equal the annual household water uses of more than 11 million homes.

As part of Fix a Leak Week, Pennsylvanians are encouraged to identify and fix leaks around their homes. The PUC and EPA offer the following tips:

- Review your water usage during a colder month, such as January or February. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons per month, there are serious leaks.
- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak.
- Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. (Be sure to flush immediately after the experiment to avoid staining the tank.)
- Examine faucet gaskets and pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe to check for surface leaks.

More tips for finding leaks and saving water are available on the **EPA’s WaterSense website** at <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2017-02/documents/ws-ourwater-detect-and-chase-down-leaks-checklist.pdf>.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission balances the needs of consumers and utilities; ensures safe and reliable utility service at reasonable rates; protects the public interest; educates consumers to make independent and

informed utility choices; furthers economic development; and fosters new technologies and competitive markets in an environmentally sound manner.

For recent news releases and video of select Commission proceedings or more information about the PUC, visit our website at <http://www.puc.pa.gov/>. Follow the PUC on Twitter – @PA_PUC for all things utility. “Like” Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission on Facebook for easy access to information on utility issues.

Source: PUC Press Release, 3/11/2021

Governor’s Office – Regulatory Agenda

Gov. Tom Wolf’s office has published the semi-annual agenda of regulations under development or consideration by all agencies. A full list of regulations and agency contact information is available on the Pennsylvania Bulletin at <https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pabull?file=/secure/pabulletin/data/vol51/51-11/411.html>.

Source: PA Bulletin, 3/13/2021

DEP to Hold Public Input Sessions on Environmental Justice Policy Revision March 22, 31

The DEP Office of Environmental Justice will hold two virtual public sessions

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Policy-Revision.aspx> to hear comments and suggestions from a variety of stakeholders on revising the existing

Environmental Justice Public Participation Policy

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Summaries-and-Documents.aspx>

The sessions will be held:

- March 22 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
- March 31 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Click here for directions on joining by conference call or online via WebEx
<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Policy-Revision.aspx>.

Specifically, DEP's Office of Environmental Justice is seeking input on the following questions:

- How can the EJ Policy address communities' environmental justice concerns?
- What worked and what were challenges with the current EJ Policy?
- How can we improve the public participation process within the policy?
- How can DEP address environmental justice concerns in addition to permitting? What are your suggestions about addressing EJ through this policy in addition to permitting?
- DEP currently delineates EJ Areas based on race (>30% minority) and income (>20% in poverty). Do you feel that the current definition, or any definition, of an Environmental Justice Area is effective?
- What revisions would you recommend for identifying vulnerable communities? Note that there is no federal definition as the US EPA intentionally does not create a definition for EJ Areas or communities, though their EJSCREEN tool is available and uses a variety of factors.

Visit DEP's Environmental Justice Policy Revision webpage for more information
<https://www.dep.pa.gov/PublicParticipation/OfficeofEnvironmentalJustice/Pages/Policy-Revision.aspx>.

Source: PA Environmental Digest, 3/14/2021

#

This newsletter provides general information, not legal advice as to any specific matter. It should not be used as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.