



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

June 5, 2018

The Honorable Daryl D. Metcalfe
Chairman-State Government Committee
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
144 Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202012
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Chairman Metcalfe and Committee Members:

Having served as Bucks County Commissioner for nearly 10 years and four-terms in the U.S. Congress representing Pennsylvania's 8th District, I can unequivocally state, during my two decades of public service, in one form or another, concerns around 'water,' took center stage. Whether it was flooding associated with major storm events of the mid 1990's, early 2000's and more recently hurricanes Irene, Lee and Superstorm Sandy, periods of drought, or contaminated ground water originating from the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and Air National Guard (ANG) in Willow Grove, PA; water was always a dominate issue.

The Delaware River runs along the eastern border of Pennsylvania including all of Bucks County. The river stretches 330 miles from its headwaters in upstate New York- providing a natural border as it runs along New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and out to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Delaware River is truly an interstate river and needs to be managed as such which is why in 1961 President Kennedy and the governors from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware signed concurrent compact legislation into law creating the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), a regional body with the force of law, to oversee a unified approach in managing a river system without regard to political boundaries.

DRBC is charged with numerous responsibilities not the least of which is managing the water supply for the more than 15 million people (approximately five percent of the nation's population) who rely on the waters of the Delaware River Basin for drinking, agricultural, and industrial use. Of the 15 million people relying on the Delaware River Basin for drinking, 5.5 million are Pennsylvanians- 43% of the Commonwealth's population.

In 2014 ground water contamination was discovered originating from the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base and Air National Guard (ANG) in Willow Grove, PA. As municipal water providers navigated the crisis -installing costly filtration systems, connecting individual homeowners on private wells to public water, ultimately the long- term solution was to transition to surface water in order to meet demand for clean, safe water.

The Honorable Daryl D. Metcalfe
Page 2
June 5, 2018

I personally met with Mr. Steve Tambini, Executive Director for DRBC on this issue. I had reached out to DRBC to ensure regional water suppliers need for water could be met and there was a process in place should the request become urgent. Mr. Tambini assured me of both. Today, water is being sourced from the Delaware River as a substitute for contaminated ground water impacting nearly 70,000 individuals in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

DRBC served as a valuable resource for my staff. Inquiries on behalf of individual constituents or local governments were addressed in a timely, professional manner. In one case, a Bucks County municipality faced flooding issues along the tidal portion of the Delaware River. Without hesitation DRBC staff organized a presentation for the government officials.

The Delaware River is an important resource, for recreation, tourism, industry, and ecology. While at times, some may perceive these interests conflict, there are many examples in Bucks County where they coexist. Bensalem, Bucks County is home to the Neshaminy State Park Tidal Marsh. Industry and manufacturing lie in close proximity as does a new development consisting of 600 townhouses and condominiums, stores, offices, and a marina. If DRBC's policies and actions and were at all prohibitive, we would not see the level of planning and development we are now experiencing within the Delaware Valley.

In its 50-plus years, the DRBC has proven its ability to manage the water resources of the basin on behalf of the 15 million people relying on it. As President Kennedy stated, "The task set for the Commission will not be easy to achieve, be we are confident that the cooperation that has brought forth this Compact will endure, and that that working together real progress can be made for the people of the Basin." The Delaware River Basin Commission stands out as a model of cooperative government and has lived up to President Kennedy's aspirations.

Your thoughtful consideration is appreciated.

Thank you.



Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress, Retired
Pa-8