

First, I would like to say hello and let you know that it is an honor for me to be appointed as member of the Environmental Task Force of the Council of State Government.

I am the Chairman of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee of Pennsylvania and my personal background is also well suited to working with the environmental area because I am a farmer by trade.

**(Comments)**

I am not going to take up your time talking about all of Pennsylvania's environmental initiatives but there is one of which I am quite proud, having been the prime mover of this legislation.

I believe has been one of the most successful overall environmental programs that Pennsylvania has undertaken and that is our "Growing Greener Program."

It went into place in December of 1999.

Growing Greener is the largest single investment of state funds in Pennsylvania's history to address Pennsylvania's critical environmental concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on recommendations made by the Governor's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Environment Commission, Growing Greener directs nearly \$650 million over the next five years to the new Environmental Stewardship Fund.

The program basically will slash the backlog of farmland preservation projects statewide; protect open space; eliminate the maintenance backlog in state parks; clean up abandoned mines and restore watersheds; provide funds for recreational trails and local parks; help communities address land use; and provide new and upgraded water and sewer systems.

Even for Pennsylvania, \$650 million is not exactly "chicken change" we are quite proud of the program.

I appreciate being here today and look forward to working with all of you in the future.