



# PENNSYLVANIA LAND TRUST ASSOCIATION

May 20, 2020

## Re. Oppose HB 2004

Dear Representative:

I write on behalf of the 70 member organizations of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and the more than 100,000 Pennsylvanians supporting them. We are dismayed that members of the House might essentially bring an end to the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund, the acclaimed nonpartisan, nonpolitical investment program that makes long-lasting infrastructure improvements in communities, creates jobs, and boosts local economies across the state.

**We urge you to oppose HB 2004, which would so damage the key features of the hugely successful Keystone Fund that it would continue to exist only in name.**

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund delivers a vast range of benefits. When we go to a playground, a park, a trail, or a nature preserve, we experience the **tangible products** of the Keystone Fund. While discussions often focus on these obvious public infrastructure benefits, the economic benefits are huge:

- As with most capital improvement investments, it supports **planning, engineering, and construction jobs** in the development of park, trail, library, higher education, and other infrastructure.
- Those facilities in turn **employ people in maintenance and program delivery** on a perpetual basis.
- Keystone investments generate **hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity**, ranging from these jobs to recreational purchases to improved property values. **Every dollar invested returns more than \$7 in economic value** in natural goods and services alone. The economic benefits are documented in the numerous economic impact studies housed at <https://conservationtools.org/conservation-benefits>

Year after year, the Keystone Fund has delivered tangible results for Pennsylvanians. Keystone capital **investments made a quarter century ago are still delivering benefits** to Pennsylvanians today. You can review the enormous scope of benefits delivered at <https://keystonefund.org/>.

### Voting Members

Allegheny Land Trust  
 Allegheny Valley Land Trust  
 Allegheny Valley Trails Association  
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
 Armstrong County Conservancy  
 Berks Nature  
 Brandywine Conservancy  
 The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation  
 Central Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Centre County Farmland Trust  
 Chesapeake Conservancy  
 Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
 ClearWater Conservancy  
 The Conservation Fund, PA Office  
 Countryside Conservancy  
 Delaware Highlands Conservancy  
 Earth Conservancy  
 Eden Hill Conservancy  
 Edward L. Rose Conservancy  
 Evergreen Conservancy  
 Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County  
 Foundation for Sustainable Forests  
 Fox Chapel Area Land Trust  
 French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust  
 French Creek Valley Conservancy  
 Glade Run Lake Conservancy  
 Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association  
 Heritage Conservancy  
 Hollow Oak Land Trust  
 Independence Conservancy  
 Lackawanna Valley Conservancy  
 Lancaster Conservancy  
 Lancaster Farmland Trust  
 The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County  
 Land Conservancy of Adams County  
 Land Trust of Bucks County  
 Lebanon Valley Conservancy  
 London Britain Land Trust  
 Manada Conservancy  
 Merrill W. Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy  
 Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy  
 Mokoma Conservancy  
 Montour Trail Council  
 Natural Lands  
 Neighborhood Gardens Trust  
 North American Land Trust  
 North Branch Land Trust  
 Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Open Land Conservancy of Chester County  
 Pennsbury Land Trust  
 Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society  
 Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust  
 Pine Creek Land Conservation Trust  
 Pine Creek Valley Watershed Association  
 Pocono Heritage Land Trust  
 The Radnor Conservancy  
 Regional Trail Corporation  
 Schuylkill County Conservancy  
 Schuylkill River Greenways Natural Heritage Area  
 Somerset County Conservancy  
 The Nature Conservancy  
 The Trust for Public Land  
 The Wallace Trust  
 Tinicum Conservancy  
 Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
 Westmoreland Conservancy  
 Westmoreland Land Trust  
 Wild Waterways Conservancy Inc.  
 Wildlands Conservancy  
 Willistown Conservation Trust  
 Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association

It's ironic that as Pennsylvanians use our local and state parks, trails, and other community open spaces in record numbers that legislators would contemplate essentially destroying the investment program that made a great deal of this green infrastructure possible.

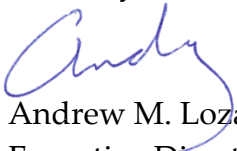
Since its 1993 establishment with an overwhelmingly approved voter referendum, a 48-0 Senate vote and 196-3 House vote, the Keystone Fund has **effectively and efficiently built lasting legacies** in our communities.

When Democrats and Republicans joined to create the automatic appropriation of realty transfer taxes to the Keystone Fund and allocation to the various investment types 27 years ago, they did this to ensure that the state would not fail to make these crucial investments; guard against political processes that could undermine the effectiveness of the investments; and create reliability for the huge number of organizations and small businesses that have to carefully plan their budgets, payrolls, and other operations created by Democrats and Republicans alike.

Make no mistake. HB 2004 would undo the very features of Keystone that make Keystone effective. A vote for HB 2004 is a vote to essentially end the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund in all but name.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Andrew M. Loza  
Executive Director

cc: member organizations

*The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association helps people conserve the lands needed for healthy, prosperous, and secure communities—the forests, farms, parks, urban gardens, and other green places that safeguard our drinking water, prevent flooding, protect wildlife, provide recreational and economic opportunities, and preserve scenic beauty and community treasures. The Association accomplishes this by helping nonprofits and local governments improve their effectiveness and efficiency in acquiring and stewarding land and easements, advancing sustainable land use practices, and connecting people to the outdoors; the Association also fosters public understanding of conservation, advocates for sound governmental policy, and leads state and national endeavors to achieve far-reaching advancements in conservation.*

