



June 18, 2018

Subject: **Support HB 2468, Stop Irresponsible Eminent Domain**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 75 member organizations of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association and the 120,000 Pennsylvanians they count as members, I write to request your **support of HB 2468** and ask that you **oppose all amendments** that would weaken the bill's safeguard against poorly considered eminent domain.

Conservation easements are a non-regulatory, property-rights-based tool for conserving special places for the public's benefit while keeping land in private ownership. The bill defends conservation easements from thoughtless application of eminent domain. It ensures that the would-be condemner will look for reasonable and prudent alternatives to the condemnation before proceeding.

In requiring orphan's court review for reasonable and prudent alternatives, HB 2468 establishes a level of review for conservation easement condemnations analogous to that provided by the Agricultural Lands Condemnation Approval Board (ALCAB) for lands in Agricultural Security Areas.

Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution states that:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the **preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment.**

A conservation easement accomplishes such preservation, and the legislation ensures that the government does not act heedless of the people's right to it. Since environmental rights don't exist in a vacuum, the legislation only requires that before exercising eminent domain on a conservation easement, the condemner look for reasonable and prudent alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Loza  
Executive Director

- Voting Members*
- Allegheny Land Trust
  - Allegheny Valley Conservancy
  - Allegheny Valley Land Trust
  - Allegheny Valley Trails Association
  - Appalachian Trail Conservancy
  - Armstrong County Conservancy Charitable Trust
  - Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania
  - Bedminster Regional Land Conservancy
  - Berks Nature
  - Brandywine Conservancy
  - The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation
  - Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
  - Centre County Farmland Trust
  - Chestnut Hill Historical Society
  - ClearWater Conservancy
  - The Conservation Fund, Pennsylvania Office
  - Countryside Conservancy
  - Delaware Highlands Conservancy
  - Earth Conservancy
  - East Nantmeal Land Trust
  - Eden Hill Conservancy
  - Edward L. Rose Conservancy
  - Evergreen Conservancy
  - Farm and Natural Land Trust of York County
  - Foundation for Sustainable Forests
  - Fox Chapel Land Conservation Trust
  - French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
  - French Creek Valley Conservancy
  - Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
  - Heritage Conservancy
  - Hollow Oak Land Trust
  - Independence Conservancy
  - Lacawac Sanctuary Foundation
  - Lackawanna Valley Conservancy
  - Lancaster County Conservancy
  - Lancaster Farmland Trust
  - The Land Conservancy for Southern Chester County
  - Land Conservancy of Adams County
  - Lebanon Valley Conservancy
  - London Britain Land Trust
  - Lower Merion Conservancy
  - Manada Conservancy
  - Merrill Linn Land & Waterways Conservancy
  - Mid-Atlantic Karst Conservancy
  - Mokoma Conservancy
  - Montour Trail Council
  - Mount Nittany Conservancy
  - Natural Lands Trust
  - The Nature Conservancy
  - 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
  - Somerset County Conservancy
  - Susquehanna Greenways Partnership
  - Tinicum Conservancy
  - The Trust for Public Land
  - The Wallace Trust
  - West Pikeland Land Trust
  - Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
  - Westmoreland Conservancy
  - Westmoreland Land Trust
  - Wild Waterways Conservancy Inc.
  - Wildlands Conservancy
  - Willistown Conservation Trust
  - Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association

