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Voting Member Organizations

Allegheny Land Trust
Armstrong Trails
Allegheny Valley Trails Association
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Armstrong County Conservancy
Berks Nature
Brandywine Conservancy
Brandywine Red Clay Alliance
The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation
Central Pennsylvania Conservancy
Centre County Farmland Trust
Chesapeake Conservancy
Chestnut Hill Conservancy
ClearWater Conservancy
The Conservation Fund, Pennsylvania Office
Countryside Conservancy
Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Earth Conservancy
Edward L. Rose Conservancy
Evergreen Conservancy
Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County
Foundation for Sustainable Forests
Fox Chapel Area Land Trust
French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust
French Creek Valley Conservancy
Glade Run Lake Conservancy
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
Heritage Conservancy
Hollow Oak Land Trust
Independence Conservancy
Keystone Trails Association
Lackawanna Valley Conservancy
Lake Eire Region Conservancy
Lancaster Conservancy
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Land Conservancy of Adams County
Land Trust of Bucks County
Lebanon Valley Conservancy
London Britain Land Trust
Manada Conservancy
Merrill 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
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 Trails

April, 29 2024

Honorable Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee

Re. **SB 645**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 70 member organizations of WeConservePA and their more than 100,000 Pennsylvania members, I ask you to **vote in the affirmative on SB 645 and advance the bill out of the Senate Appropriations Committee.**

More than 300,000 Philadelphia residents live on blocks with one or more abandoned houses or lots. These derelict buildings and parcels create tremendous health, safety, and financial problems for those in the surrounding homes. SB 645 would remove a serious impediment to residents turning many of these blights on communities into community assets. It would **adjust government rules regarding adverse possession in order to honor and accelerate private initiatives of converting abandoned, blighted properties into productive, community-serving gardens.**

SB 645 would reduce the statutory period for adverse possession from twenty-one years to ten years for derelict lots that are redeveloped into gardens in Philadelphia. More than 40,000 vacant lots in the city heavily burden residents. This bill will allow individuals and organizations that have restored blighted lots and maintained them as gardens in communities for at least five years to pursue clear title. Reducing the statutory period to ten years would also place Pennsylvania in line with many other states that have shortened their statutory period.

SB 645 would help power the engine of private initiative and community energy to meaningfully address the vexing problem of blighted lots and do so without requiring government expenditures or other involvement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew M. Loza
Executive Director

cc: member organizations