

**GREG ROTHMAN, MEMBER
87TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT**

DEPUTY WHIP

HARRISBURG OFFICE
163-A EAST WING
PO BOX 202087
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2087
PHONE: 717-783-2063
FAX: 717-782-2897

DISTRICT OFFICE
1200 CAMP HILL BY-PASS
SUITE 202
CAMP HILL, PA 17011
PHONE: 717-975-2235
FAX: 717-975-2229



House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
INSURANCE
LIQUOR CONTROL
TRANSPORTATION
URBAN AFFAIRS

**GROTHMAN@PAHOUSEGOP.COM
WWW.REPROTHMAN.COM
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/REPROTHMAN**

February 24, 2020

Secretary Patrick McDonnell
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection
Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Secretary McDonnell,

As you heard clearly at today's House Appropriations Committee hearing, DEP's permit review process remains a significant concern for the committee – and indeed, that concern permeates our caucus.

Job-creating industries spanning the Commonwealth have brought us story after story of the difficulty of doing business in Pennsylvania because of our arcane permit review process. We have heard numerous accounts – confirmed by DEP's own permit data – of it taking DEP permit staff over a year to approve simple earth disturbance permits that were designed and sealed by Pennsylvania-licensed engineers. In many instances, DEP staff offers critiques which have no foundation in statute or regulation, but which are simply matters of personal preference. Furthermore, these individual permit reviewers are rarely engineers themselves, yet they require licensed professionals to alter their permits or face further delays and uncertainty.

While they do not reflect the work of all DEP regional office staff, these reports underscore a culture that seemingly places higher value on placating career bureaucrats than respecting the investments job creators are struggling to bring to Pennsylvania.

With this in mind, I believe it is time to have a serious discussion about mechanisms to bring greater accountability and predictability to the permit review process, namely third-party review. While you touched on some of them briefly today, I am interested in better understanding the totality of your concerns with greater specificity.

For example, you mentioned conflict issues related to engineering firms that could be engaged both in writing as well as reviewing permits. Certainly, DEP should be able to shape policy that would ensure such obvious conflicts did not exist. And DEP would have to have the final word

on any permit approvals to maintain its preeminence over the permitting process. However, there may be other obstacles that my colleagues and I have not contemplated. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could outline in detail what those obstacles are as well as any proposals you have for addressing them.

Thank you for your time and attention today and throughout this budget season.

Sincerely,



GREG ROTHMAN
State Representative
87th Legislative District

cc: Honorable Stan Saylor
Honorable Mike Turzai
Honorable Bryan Cutler
Honorable Kerry Benninghoff
Honorable Daryl Metcalfe