

Save the Loyalsock Coalition

www.saveloyalsock.org

November 10, 2015

L. Richard Sayles
Chair
Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street, 7th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17015

Dear Mr. Sayles:

The Save the Loyalsock Coalition thanks and greatly appreciates the Conservation and Natural Resource Advisory Council (CNRAC) for its October 6 letter to Secretary Dunn regarding the protection of an extraordinary tract of the Loyalsock State Forest in Lycoming County known as the Clarence Moore Lands.

The Save the Loyalsock Coalition, comprised of statewide and local conservation, environmental, recreation, fishing and outdoors organizations representing over 100,000 Pennsylvanians, has worked since 2012 to protect the Clarence Moore Lands from natural gas development.

Given the Council's diverse and talented membership, we believe that your reasoning and advice should be of great benefit to Governor Wolf, Secretary Dunn and other leaders in state government. We also thank the Council for allowing the Coalition to provide input on this issue.

Our Coalition has urged Governor Wolf and his DCNR to use their considerable, and in this case, their unusual powers to do everything possible to protect the Clarence Moore Lands and its irreplaceable natural and recreational resources. These resources include one of the last unbroken core forests in north central Pennsylvania, two Exceptional Value watersheds including the spectacular Rock Run, the popular Old Loggers Path hiking trail, and a National Audubon Society-designated Important Bird Area.

We therefore applaud CNRAC's recommendation that DCNR "work to the best of its ability to protect the surface area" of this section of the Loyalsock, and CNRAC's view that "the preferred course of action would be for DCNR to negotiate a 'No Surface Disturbance Use Agreement' with the owners of the subsurface resources.

If surface disturbance in the Clarence Moore Lands is unavoidable, CNRAC further recommends that DCNR negotiate an agreement that protects the most sensitive areas of the tract and minimizes any impacts. You should know that members of the Save the Loyalsock Coalition have had numerous meetings with DCNR and provided the agency with detailed information on the ecological and recreational resources to further guide its decision-making.

Your letter also encourages DCNR to continue to disseminate pertinent information about the Loyalsock to the public in a timely manner, to continue meet with stakeholders, and to allow for public comment.

We wholeheartedly agree with CNRAC. The coalition also believes that prior to initiating any significant natural gas development on public lands, the DCNR should provide a public comment period; public access during the comment period to the proposed development plans and DCNR's analysis of the effects of the potential development on the ecological, recreational, wildlife, cultural and aesthetic resources; at least one public meeting or hearing; and a comment-response document prepared by DCNR, and provided to the public, after the submission of public comments.

Thank you again for your fine and well-reasoned letter, and for taking a principled stand on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Michael Helbing
Staff attorney,
PennFuture

Richard A. Martin
Coordinator,
PA Forest Coalition

Carol Kafer
President,
Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association

James Slotterback
President,
Responsible Drilling Alliance

Brook Lenker
Executive Director,
FracTracker Alliance

Lana Gulden
Treasurer,
Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air
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Jack Miller
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Otzinachson Group of the Sierra Club,
Pennsylvania Chapter

David Masur
Executive Director,
PennEnvironment

Joanne Kilgour
Director,
Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter

Philip S. Wallis
Executive Director and Vice President,
Audubon Pennsylvania

cc: The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania
Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
John Norbeck, Deputy Secretary for Parks and Forestry

Daniel Devlin, State Forester

John Quigley, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

The Honorable Garth Everett

The Honorable John Maher

The Honorable Greg Vitali

The Honorable Jeff Wheeland

The Honorable Gene Yaw

The Honorable John Yudichak