



Smithfield Township Environmental Advisory Council
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May 21, 2024

Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors
Attn: Chairman Jacob Pride
1155 Red Fox Road
East Stroudsburg, PA 18360

RE: Environmental Advisory Council Recommendation
Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Wetlands and Validity Challenge

Dear Chairman Pride:

The EAC was reactivated this year (2024). One of our charges is to recommend plans and programs for the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment within Smithfield Township. Wetlands are an integral component of our project development responsibility. We concur with the need to update current wetland guidelines and support the proposed ordinance.

In our lengthy discussion of the ordinance, the EAC unanimously agreed that maintaining the validity of wetland standards is a responsibility of the EAC's charter. Environmental conditions evolve over time, and with your agreement, the EAC proposes to develop an evidence-based analysis of critical issues to provide information for updates as needed.

We will launch the project by analyzing how wetland margins are established. The EAC discussed the proposed wetland margin area (75 feet) and a home builder's ability to build up to 40% of the wetland margin area. We were unable to determine on what basis the margins were chosen. The EAC will begin our ongoing project with a literature review of evidence findings on how these margins could be set, as well as any documented effects on wetlands.

We hope to complete this startup project within 12 months. We believe this project will provide you with evidence-based findings to consider for subsequent updates. We will use it to test and develop a collaborative model for further issue analysis that would be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patricia M. Owens'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Patricia M. Owens, Chair
Environmental Advisory Council