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As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I get an inside look at how YOUR hard-earned tax dollars are spent in state government. The Senate Appropriations Committee is holding a series of hearings to analyze the governor's proposed $45.8 billion 2024-25 state budget.

His budget proposes to grow state government spending by more than 7%. These hearings allow legislators on both sides of the aisle to ask questions about the spending proposal, effectiveness of state programs, and how we can find efficiencies within these agencies to make YOUR dollars go further.

Below is a breakdown of each of the public hearings held this week:

Fish and Boat Commission and Game Commission

Questions have arisen about the Pennsylvania Game Commission's decision to employ a lobbyist at $10,000 per month for state legislative engagement. Executive Director Bryan Burhans was pressed for justification. Legislation I've sponsored would ban this practice for all of state government – it's not an appropriate use of your tax dollars (or hunting license fees).



The Fish and Boat Commission gives its awareness of proposed pumped storage facility at Cuffs Run and the projects potential impact on the Susquehanna River. Furthermore, the Pennsylvania Game Commission talks about its vehicle fleet size and cost.



Department of Agriculture

Secretary Russell Redding committed to advocating on behalf of York County farmers amidst challenges arising from neighboring states' energy policies. Sec. Redding even agreed to formally submit a letter opposing the proposed Cuffs Run pumped storage facility.



Exploring the intersection of agriculture, technology, and security measures in place for farming databases and cloud technology.



Department of Education

After the Shapiro Administration supported a plan recommending $7 billion in new education funding, the Secretary of Education, who had two votes on the Basic Education Funding Commission by way of staff designees, could not speak as to why the governor's budget does not reflect this recommendation in the budget.



The Department of Education Secretary could not explain why parts of the Basic Education Funding Commission report that his agency supported made it into the budget – like a plan to use self-reporting poverty data for funding allocation – while other parts of the report did not.



Department of Environmental Protection

One of the biggest frustrations I hear about state government is how long it takes to receive permits from the Department of Environmental Protection.





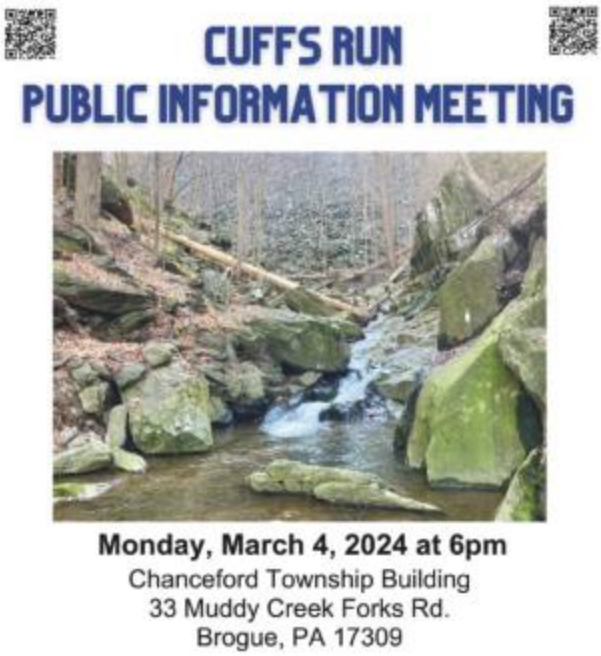
PA Liquor Control Board

Reason recently published a story outlining how the state's Liquor Control Board is

restrictions, including one business in York County.



Learn How to Submit Public Comment to Proposed Pumped Storage Facility



Next week, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Office of Public Participation (OPP) will be hosting an informational session to educate the public on the application and licensing process regarding the proposed pumped storage hydro project at Cuffs Run on the Lower Susquehanna River.

This meeting is a vital opportunity for the community to understand the application and licensing process. FERC OPP will provide information on how the public can actively participate in the process, including the timing and methods of commenting and intervening.

Please note: this meeting is NOT a platform to express opposition or support for the project directly to FERC staff. The OPP will be there to encourage public participation and provide valuable information on how community members can engage effectively.

Partner organizations including Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Cuffs Run Alliance, Lancaster Conservancy, Susquehanna National Heritage Area, Farm & Natural Lands Trust, and Keystone Trails Association will be co-hosting the meeting with FERC OPP.

Date: Monday, March 4

Time: 6 p.m.

Location: Chanceford Township Building, 33 Muddy Creek Forks Road, Brogue, PA 17309

I encourage you to share this information with friends, family, and neighbors who may not be subscribed to my e-newsletter.



In an effort to recruit and retain emergency medical services (EMS) professionals, a tuition assistance program offers up to $5,000 for reimbursement of EMS state certification training for permanent Pennsylvania residents.

Up to $300 is available for emergency medical responders, up to $800 for emergency medical technicians, up to $1,000 for advanced emergency medical technicians and up to $5,000 for paramedics.

Pennsylvania-licensed EMS agencies are eligible to receive up to $1,250 of recruitment and retention expenses per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Reimbursement will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted. Learn more here.



Individuals who believe they are beneficiaries, executors or legal representatives of a family member or friend can locate lost life insurance policies and annuity contracts through the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).

When a request is received, the NAIC will give participating companies that have policy information access to respond to you as the designated beneficiary or if you are authorized to receive information. It will also allow participating companies to search their records to determine whether they have a life insurance policy or annuity contract in the name of the deceased person.

Access NAIC's life insurance policy locator here.



To bolster agriculture – the state's top industry – $500,000 in grants is available to help Pennsylvania farms pursue growth opportunities. Funding will be used to benefit economic development, job creation and innovation.

The Farm Vitality Planning Grant Program will help fund professional services for those planning for the future of a farm. The program is designed to enhance the long-term vitality of Pennsylvania's farms through sound business planning, efficient transitions of farm ownership, strategic farm expansion, diversification of agricultural production and building a team of financial and technical experts as a resource for the state's farmers.

The maximum grant amount is $7,500 and is limited to 75% of project costs. Learn more about guidelines and how to apply.



Sunday, March 3, is National Anthem Day. “The Star-Spangled Banner” shares a message of endurance and perseverance. Francis Scott Key originally wrote his poem during a naval attack on Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. That battle was nearly lost.

It wasn’t until March 3, 1931, that President Herbert Hoover signed a law officially making the “The Star-Spangled Banner” our country’s national anthem.

Rather than commemorating victory, our national anthem highlights our ability to withstand attack. Today, we continue to raise our flag and refuse to be defeated.



You can get updates over on X by following me here. The next hearing starts on Tuesday, March 5, at 9:30 a.m. with the Department of Human Services.

Upcoming PennDOT Maintenance Projects

Most weeks, PennDOT shares with me its maintenance schedule for the week ahead. When it becomes available, you can view the full list here to see if it will impact you and your family.

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717-787-7085
9 am - 4:30 pm

MOBILE OFFICE
Springettsbury Township
(First Thursday of each month)
Penn Township
(Third Thursday of each month)

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