

# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

From Milliron and Goodman Government Relations, LLC, Harrisburg, PA

**Berks County  
Water & Sewer**  
ASSOCIATION

March 25, 2019 Issue 54

## Pennsylvania's Unemployment Rate Dropped to 4 Percent in February

*Six of the eleven supersectors added jobs over the month*

**O**n March 22, 2019, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) released its employment situation report for February 2019.

Pennsylvania's unemployment rate decreased to 4 percent in February, down one-tenth of a percentage point from January and matching the lowest rate on record. The national rate was 3.8 percent in February, down two-tenths of a percentage point. The Pennsylvania unemployment rate declined by one-half of a percentage point from February 2018.

The estimated number of Pennsylvania residents working or looking for work, known as the civilian labor force, was up 8,000 over the month. The number of employed Pennsylvanians rose by 15,000 to a record high of 6,209,000. The number of unemployed residents was down 5,000 from January to its lowest level since October 2010.

The estimated number of jobs in Pennsylvania,

referred to as total nonfarm jobs, was down 200 from January's record high to 6,037,800 in February. Highlights from this month's jobs report include:

- Total nonfarm jobs increased from January in six of the 11 industry supersectors.
- Service providing industries rose to a record high level.
- The largest volume gain was trade, transportation & utilities.
- Leisure & hospitality jobs rose to a record high level.

Over the past 12 months, jobs increased 0.7 percent in the commonwealth with gains in eight of the 11 supersectors. Education & health services had the largest volume 12-month gain. Nationally, jobs were up 1.7 percent during this timeframe.

Additional information is available on the L&I website at [www.dli.pa.gov](http://www.dli.pa.gov)

**Note:** The above data are seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted data provide the most valid month-to-month comparison.

**Source:** PA Department of Labor, 3/22/2019

## EQB – Proposed

## Rulemaking: Water Quality Standards; Class A Stream Redesignations

The Environmental Quality Board (Board) proposes to amend 25 Pa. Code, Chapter 93 (relating to water quality standards) modify the drainage lists in numerous subsections throughout the chapter.

The amendments will go into effect upon publication in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

For more information, contact Thomas Barron, Bureau of Clean Water, 11th Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building, PO Box 8774, 400 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8774, (717) 7879637; or Michelle Moses, Assistant Counsel, Bureau of Regulatory Counsel, 9th Floor, Rachel Carson State Office Building, PO Box 8464, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8464, (717) 787-7060

**Source:** Pennsylvania Bulletin, 3/23/2019  
<https://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol49/4912/424.html>

## Governor's Office – Regulatory Agenda

The Governor's Office published a list of regulations under development or consideration by departments under its purview. The list is contained in full in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. You can review all DEP regulations under development.

### Background

- Executive Order 1996-1 requires all agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor to submit for publication semiannually an agenda of regulations under development or consideration.
- The agendas are compiled to provide members of the regulated community advanced notice of regulatory activity. It is the intention of the Administration that these agendas will serve to increase public participation in the regulatory process.

- Agency contacts should be contacted for more information regarding the regulation and the procedure for submitting comments.

- This Agenda represents the Administration's present intentions regarding future regulations. The information provided is current as of February 22, 2019. The nature and complexity of an individual regulation obviously will determine whether and when any particular regulation listed (as well as any considered subsequent to publication of this Agenda) is published.

**Source:** Pennsylvania Bulletin, 3/23/2019  
<https://www.pabulletin.com/secure/data/vol49/4912/435.html>

## Briggs Introduces Legislation to Reduce Polystyrene Pollution

State Rep. Tim Briggs introduced legislation to reduce the amount of polystyrene material that pollutes the environment.

### House Bill 627

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?year=2019&ind=0&body=H&type=B&BN=0627> would prohibit food establishments from using single-use polystyrene containers (solid or foam) to dispense prepared foods.

"We've all seen takeout cups and containers littering the sides of our roadways. Polystyrene can take hundreds of years to decompose, and in the meantime it clogs our local waterways and poses a threat to birds and marine life," said Briggs, DMontgomery. "My legislation would mean less of this material ends up in our waterways and in our landfills, and it would help us to reduce our overall impact on the world around us."

Briggs introduced similar legislation last session. In the fall, he joined environmental groups to announce 15,000 signatures were collected on a petition supporting the ban.

Microplastics - tiny particles often resulting from

the breakdown of larger plastic materials - have been found in birds and fish, and last year, were found in human stool samples for the first time, leading to questions about the impact on human health.

"Every day, we are reminded that our disposable society is creating a growing waste problem. It's time to change the way we live and think," Briggs said. "We have to do everything we can to keep our air and water clean, and that includes encouraging the use of materials that are more naturally biodegradable and have less of an impact on our environment."

**Source:** Rep. Briggs Press Release, 3/18/2019

## Proposed EPA program would give \$50-million boost to children's health

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a new \$50-million grant program, the **Healthy Schools Grant Program**, <https://www.epa.gov/schools> to expand the Trump Administration's efforts to protect children where they learn and play. The announcement is part of President Trump's proposed Fiscal Year 2020 budget and supports **EPA's ongoing commitment to evaluate and address risks to children's health** [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201810/documents/childrens\\_health\\_policy\\_reaffirmation\\_memo.10.11.18.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/201810/documents/childrens_health_policy_reaffirmation_memo.10.11.18.pdf).

"Protecting children's health is a top priority for EPA, and this new funding would help school's address poor and deteriorating conditions that can harm children's health and stymie academic progress," said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler. "This grant program would help schools, especially those in underserved communities, reduce exposures to environmental hazards, create healthier learning environments, and ensure children can reach their fullest potential."

"Children tend to be at greater risk from environmental hazards than adults because of their greater exposure relative to their body mass and because their developing organs make them more susceptible," said Dr. Michael Firestone, acting

director for EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection. "This new grant program is aimed at reducing those risks where children spend most of their time learning and playing."

"Children need clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and healthy environments to learn, grow and thrive," said EPA Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio. "There are thousands of children in the mid-Atlantic region whose learning environments could potentially be improved by preventing and reducing environmental hazards through the Healthy Schools Grant Program."

The Healthy Schools Grant Program is a comprehensive environmental health grant program with the goal of identifying and addressing environmental health risks in and around schools that contribute to increased absenteeism and reduced academic performance. The program would provide a total of \$50 million for schools to identify, prevent, reduce and resolve environmental hazards including:

- reducing childhood lead exposure;
- reducing asthma triggers;
- promoting integrated pest management; and
- reducing or eliminating childhood exposure to one or more toxic chemicals in schools.

Eligible recipients would include state and local governments, federally recognized tribal governments, and non-profit organizations. Nearly 50 million children attend more than 100,000 K-12 schools every day. Reducing exposures to environmental hazards in schools creates healthier learning environments, which enables children to perform better in the classroom and thereby improve their academic performance and expand their opportunities later in life.

The Healthy Schools Grant Program would also support the **Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures and Associated Health Impacts** (*Lead Action Plan*) <https://www.epa.gov/lead/federal-action-plan-reduce-childhood-lead-exposure>, which was unveiled in December by EPA and 16 other federal departments and offices. The Lead Action Plan was developed by the President's Task Force on

Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children as a blueprint for reducing lead exposure and associated harms by working with states, tribes and local communities, along with businesses, property owners and parents.

To learn more about what EPA is doing to promote healthy schools, visit [www.epa.gov/schools](http://www.epa.gov/schools), and to learn about all of EPA's Children's Health programs, visit [www.epa.gov/children](http://www.epa.gov/children).

**Source:** EPA Press Release, 3/20/2019

## PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Planning Steering Committee Workgroup Estimates Funding Gap Of \$1.467 Billion over Next 6 Years

The Funding Workgroup of the PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Steering Committee estimated an annual funding gap of \$244.5 million over at least the next 6 years totaling \$1.467 billion to implement practices needed to meet Pennsylvania's Bay cleanup obligations.

If Pennsylvania continued with its existing programs and resources, it would **miss the 2025 nitrogen reduction goal by at least 19 years (2044)** [http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout4\\_County%20Planning%20Progress%20Document%203-18-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout4_County%20Planning%20Progress%20Document%203-18-19.pdf).

In contrast, with existing programs, Pennsylvania should meet its phosphorus reduction goal by 2025.

The Chesapeake Bay Program and DEP presented estimates it would **cost about \$459.6 million annually for the next 6 years to achieve** [http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout1\\_WIP%20Steering%20Committee%20Technical%20Presentation%203-21-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout1_WIP%20Steering%20Committee%20Technical%20Presentation%203-21-19.pdf) the nitrogen and phosphorus reductions recommended by the Agriculture (\$313.1 million), Stormwater (\$78.5 million) and Forestry

(\$67.7 million) workgroups considering capital, maintenance and operating costs over the life of the best management practices recommended. The Funding Workgroup said agency implementation of the Bay Watershed Plan for the state and counties will result in needing an additional 188 people at an annual cost of \$14.1 million.

Between implementing the Workgroup recommendations and the personnel needed, the Funding Workgroup said there was a need for \$473.5 million annually for at least the next 6 years. Existing resources equal \$229.1 million a year, so there is a gap of \$244.5 million a year for the next 6 years.

Among the list of options included in the Funding Workgroup Report to close the gap were:

- Expand funding for TreeVitalize, Growing Greener and Abandoned Mine Reclamation
- Use PennVEST funds to create county revolving loan funds
- Leveraging the existing Farmland Preservation Program to promote conservation
- Provide agriculture integrator incentives and industry pressure
- Adopt the Restore Pennsylvania funding initiative, PA Farm Bill
- Expand the REAP Farm Conservation Tax Credit Program
- Use pay for performance mechanisms to attract private capital
- Eliminate the Sales Tax Exemption for bottled water
- Adopt a water use fee

The presentations given at the meeting are included in these handouts:

- **Handout #1 – Scenario Results for the Draft WIP** (PDF) [http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout1\\_WIP%20Steering%20Committee%20Technical%20Presentation%203-21-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP/2019/March22/Handout1_WIP%20Steering%20Committee%20Technical%20Presentation%203-21-19.pdf)

- **Handout #2 – Pennsylvania Snapshot (Bay Goals)** (PDF)

[http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout2\\_Pennsylvania%20Snapshot%20Bay%20Goals%20318-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout2_Pennsylvania%20Snapshot%20Bay%20Goals%20318-19.pdf)

- **Handout #3 – Pennsylvania Snapshot (Local Waterways Goals)** (PDF)

[http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout3\\_Pennsylvania%20Snapshot%20Local%20Waterways%20318-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout3_Pennsylvania%20Snapshot%20Local%20Waterways%20318-19.pdf)

- **Handout #4 – County Planning Progress** (PDF)

[http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout4\\_County%20Planning%20Progress%20Document%20318-19.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout4_County%20Planning%20Progress%20Document%20318-19.pdf)

- **Handout #5 – Funding Workgroup Recommendations**

[http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout5\\_Funding%20WG%20Steering%20Committee%20Presentation\\_Final.pdf](http://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIP3/2019/March22/Handout5_Funding%20WG%20Steering%20Committee%20Presentation_Final.pdf)

The next meeting of the Steering Committee has been scheduled for April 3, 2nd Floor Auditorium, Rachel Carson Building starting at 9:00 a.m. to review the draft of the Watershed Implementation Plan.

Click here

<https://meet.lync.com/pagov/vbkasi/PPB45C9M> to join the meeting via Skype. Participants may also need to call in +1 (267) 332-8737. CONFERENCE ID: 75588007.

For more information and copies of available handouts, visit the **PA Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Steering Committee webpage** at

<https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/Pennsylvania%20Chesapeake%20Bay%20Program%20Office/WIP3/Pages/WIP-SteeringCommittee-Actions.aspx>.

**Source:** PA Environmental Digest, 3/25/2019

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