



# GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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## Gov. Wolf Signs Second Renewal of COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for State Response and Recovery

**O**n September 1, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf signed a second renewal of his 90-day disaster declaration for the COVID-19 pandemic yesterday. He originally signed it March 6 following the announcement of the first two presumptive positive cases of the virus in the commonwealth.

"As we approach the six-month mark of this crisis, I continue to be amazed at the resiliency and strength shown by Pennsylvanians during this pandemic," Gov. Wolf said. "We are going to continue to combat the health and economic effects of COVID-19, and the renewal of my disaster declaration will provide us with resources and support needed for this effort."

The emergency disaster declaration provides for increased support to state agencies involved in the continued response to the virus and recovery for the state during reopening. This includes expediting supply procurement and lifting certain regulations to allow for efficient and effective mitigation.

The disaster declaration has allowed for waivers and extensions to continue to provide for Pennsylvanians and businesses under the unprecedented circumstances of the pandemic, including the ability to waive the one-week waiting period to receive unemployment compensation, work search requirements, and the registration with PA CareerLink for applicants, and to provide relief from charges for employers; and allowing the commonwealth to suspend numerous training requirements and certification and licensure renewals for health care professionals, child care workers, direct care workers, direct support professionals, among other professional groups who provide life-sustaining services to our children, seniors, and vulnerable residents.

Through the disaster declaration, PEMA has been able to mission assign the National Guard to provide various types of support for long term care facilities, including providing direct patient care support, ancillary support, and testing, and at community-based testing sites. It also provides PEMA with the ability to leverage continued federal support such as non-congregate sheltering.

The renewed disaster declaration will continue to support all of these efforts, as well as allow PEMA to rapidly scale response efforts and employ new

intervention tactics, such as the administration of a vaccine.

The Department of Health's Department Operations Center at PEMA continues to be active, as is the CRCC there.

Read the amendment to the emergency disaster declaration here <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20200831-TWW-amendment-to-COVID-disaster-emergency-proclamation.pdf>.

Source: Governor Wolf's Press Office, 9/1/2020

## Revenue Department Releases August 2020 Collections

Pennsylvania collected \$2.5 billion in General Fund revenue in August, which was **\$209 million, or 8.9 percent, more than anticipated**, Revenue Secretary Dan Hassell reported today. Fiscal year-to-date General Fund collections total \$6.7 billion, which is **\$210.3 million, or 3.3 percent, above estimate**.

The Department of Revenue estimates that approximately \$187 million of the revenue collected in August can be attributed to extending the due date to August 14, 2020 for corporations that had annual corporate net income tax payments due in April, May, June or July.

"August revenue collections show us that we're still seeing the effects of extending tax deadlines to provide relief to Pennsylvania taxpayers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those extensions included moving back the deadline for corporate taxpayers to file their returns and make their annual payments," Secretary Hassell said. "We will continue to keep a close eye on revenue collections so that the Governor and members of the General Assembly have the most up-to-date information possible in the coming months."

Below is a full overview of August revenues by tax type.

**Sales tax receipts** totaled \$1 billion for August, \$92.7 million above estimate. Year-to-date sales tax collections total \$2.3 billion, which is **\$92.7 million, or 4.2 percent, more than anticipated**.

**Personal income tax (PIT) revenue** in August was \$876.1 million, \$42.9 million above estimate. This brings year-to-date PIT collections to \$3.2 billion, which is **\$42.9 million, or 1.4 percent, above estimate**.

**August corporation tax revenue** of \$303.3 million was \$26.8 million above estimate. Year-to-date corporation tax collections total \$543.8 million, which is **\$28.2 million, or 5.5 percent, above estimate**.

**Inheritance tax revenue** for the month was \$92.1 million, \$5.9 million above estimate, bringing the year-to-date total to \$210.4 million, which is **\$5.8 million, or 2.9 percent, above estimate**.

**Realty transfer tax revenue** was \$56.5 million for August, \$14.3 million above estimate, bringing the fiscal-year total to \$74.4 million, which is **\$14.3 million, or 23.8 percent, more than anticipated**.

**Other General Fund tax revenue**, including cigarette, malt beverage, liquor and gaming taxes, totaled \$169.4 million for the month, \$32 million above estimate and bringing the year-to-date total to \$314.3 million, which is **\$319 million, or 11.3 percent, above estimate**.

**Non-tax revenue** totaled \$20.6 million for the month, \$5.6 million below estimate, bringing the year-to-date total to \$34.8 million, which is **\$5.5 million, or 13.7 percent, below estimate**.

In addition to the General Fund collections, the **Motor License Fund** received \$265.8 million for the month, \$0.9 million below estimate. Fiscal year-to-date collections for the fund - which include the commonly known gas and diesel taxes, as well as other license, fine and fee revenues - total \$553.2 million, which is **\$6.4 million, or 1.2 percent, above estimate**.

Source: PA DOR Press Release, 9/1/2020

# Eight Counties to add Buffers & Advance their Clean Water Plans with NFWF Grant Awarded to CBF

*Adams, Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties.*

**A** grant by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) awarded to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) and matching funds will provide nearly \$2 million in investments to plant and maintain 360 acres of new trees and boost efforts in eight Pennsylvania counties toward achieving local plans for cleaner water.

The NFWF grants announced today are made through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund, funded primarily by the Environmental Protection Agency and through the Chesapeake Bay Program.

CBF will administer the three-year NFWF grant of \$975,000 and a matching amount of \$977,880.

With the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership, which CBF coordinates, other grant partners include the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Chesapeake Conservancy, and Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals.

"CBF thanks the National Fish and Wildlife Federation for this investment in the important work of adding streamside buffers to reduce pollution entering our local waters," said Shannon Gority, CBF Executive Director in Pennsylvania.

"It will take planting trees in the right places and with the right partners to reach buffer goals in clean water plans set by key counties," Gority added. "With this investment by NFWF and so many dedicated partners who share a commitment to clean water, counties will be better prepared to take action to protect and restore local waters. That benefits all Pennsylvanians and everyone else downstream to the Bay."

NFWF also announced that the Chesapeake Conservancy will receive a grant resulting in full-farm restoration on 25-30 farms in Pennsylvania. The project has the potential to serve as a national model for coordinating on-the-ground implementation with high-resolution mapping to improve the health of streams so that they can be removed from Pennsylvania's impaired streams list. CBF is a partner on the grant to the Conservancy.

"Partnerships are the key to ensuring that we leave a better legacy for water quality, wildlife habitat, recreation, and our way of life for future generations," said Chesapeake Conservancy President and CEO Joel Dunn. "We look forward to working with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the members of the Precision Conservation Partnership and thank NFWF for the funding to make our work possible. Together we can do hard things."

DCNR's Riparian Forest Buffer Advisory Committee will help coordinate the NFWF grant to CBF.

"The benefits and values of trees and forests are more critical than ever as our commonwealth faces increasing financial, social and environmental challenges," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "This project embodies one of DCNR's core principles of partnerships, putting into practice the need to work together to solve complex problems. We are delighted for this increased funding and proud to work with this group of committed partners."

CBF's proposal for its NFWF grant was spurred by the goal of 85,650 acres of streamside buffers by 2025 that is part of Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). "We crunched the numbers and realized you would need many technicians on the ground to meet that goal," says Molly Cheatum, CBF's Restoration Program Manager in Pennsylvania and grant administrator. "Between state agencies and non-profit organizations only 25-30 technicians currently implement buffers. This grant presents an opportunity to build a collaborative workforce involving the private sector."

The grant will be used to engage, train, and certify 15-20 private sector landscape professionals in buffer installation and maintenance, doubling and potentially tripling the workforce on the ground.

The nearly \$2 million in investments as result of the NFWF grant will provide nine trained technicians to assist priority counties in outreach and education to 2,400 landowners within Adams, Bedford, Centre, Cumberland, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, and York counties. The grant is designed to boost countywide action plans toward their buffer goals.

Focused efforts through county conservation districts to add buffers in the priority counties will produce the most return on pollution-reduction dollars and accelerate the Commonwealth toward achieving the statewide WIP goal for buffers.

Investments by the Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership will be in the form of technical assistance, trees, supplies, and forward contracting of maintenance activities on the 360 acres.

The Keystone 10 Million Trees Partnership is a collaborative effort of 145 groups from national, regional, state, and local agencies, conservation organizations, watershed groups, conservancies, outdoors enthusiasts, businesses, and individuals. Its ambitious goal is to plant 10 million trees in the Commonwealth by the end of 2025.

This grant project will also test a new buffer incentive program with simulated property tax relief for each acre of buffer installed. Participating farmers will be surveyed to determine if permanent property tax relief is a meaningful incentive for them to convert crop/pastureland to streamside forested buffers.

"We believe farmers should be appropriately compensated for installing the streamside forest - a critically important addition to the land providing benefits for water, wildlife, and human health," said Bill Chain, CBF's Senior Agriculture Program Manager in Pennsylvania.

Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals will create a certification program and a one-day

workshop on buffer maintenance for 17-20 contractors. CBF will contract with those who go through the training. Eventually, the one-day buffer program could be offered statewide and in Maryland and Virginia.

The NFWF grant to CBF is among 56 restoration and water quality improvement grants made through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund for 2020, totaling \$18 million for projects in the Bay region. An anticipated matching amount of about \$19 million would lead to a total on-the-ground impact of over \$37 million.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation will apply nearly \$2 million in National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant and matching funding to add streamside buffers in eight Pennsylvania counties.

**Source:** CBF Press Release, 9/2/2020

## **EPA Announces Record \$18 Million for Projects in Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

**O**n September 2, 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a record \$18 million in grants to support the restoration and conservation of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in six states and the District of Columbia. The 56 grants will generate nearly \$19 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of nearly \$37 million.

The grants were awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-bay-stewardship-fund>, a partnership between EPA's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants Program (INSR Program) and Small Watershed Grants Program (SWG Program), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The grants announced today, a record amount for the Stewardship Fund, will improve waterways, restore habitats and strengthen iconic species in Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. The funds will engage farmers and

agricultural producers, homeowners, churches, businesses and municipalities in on-the-ground restoration that supports quality of life in their communities, improving local waterways and, ultimately, the health of the Bay.

"EPA's ongoing commitment and accountability to the restoration of the Bay is furthered by these grants that help address some of our most critical challenges, including reducing pollution from agricultural operations in Pennsylvania," said EPA Region 3 Administrator Cosmo Servidio.

For example, a \$1 million INSR grant, with a \$1.19 million match is being awarded to the Chesapeake Conservancy to implement a regional restoration plan in central Pennsylvania that will result in full-farm restoration on 25 farms, enhanced coordination of outreach and technical assistance, improved messaging to accelerate landowner recruitment and knowledge transfer, and restoration projects to rapidly de-list 46 miles of impaired streams.

A \$500,000 SWG grant, with an equal match, is being awarded to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to work with the Octoraro Source Water Collaborative in Lancaster and Chester counties, Pennsylvania to reduce pollution through measures that include agricultural best management practices on Plain Sect farms.

"Addressing pivotal issues like excess nutrients and habitat degradation are key to improving the health of Chesapeake Bay and also have benefits to states like New York, which shares the watershed that feeds the Bay," said EPA Region 2 Administrator Pete Lopez. "The projects in New York are critical to further advancing progress in restoring wetlands and reconnecting habitat for brook trout in the Susquehanna watershed."

A complete list of the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund 2020 grants winners is available at: <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/chesapeake-bay-2020-grant-slate.pdf>

EPA funded \$16 million of the more than \$18 million in grants being announced today. Additional support was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nestle and the Altria Group Restoring America's Resources partnership. "NRCS supports this collaborative approach with EPA and partners to further conservation on all lands in the Bay watershed," said Terrell Erickson, NRCS Regional Conservationist of the Northeast.

"This is an investment in projects that improve local streams, rivers and habitat, and ultimately, the Bay," said Servidio. "These grants are an example of the substantial support EPA is providing to help our partners reach their 2025 Bay TMDL goals. Local projects by groups and communities will continue to be critical to our success in achieving clean water."

The INSR Program awarded nearly \$7 million to seven projects, with recipients providing more than \$7.3 million in match. The program provides grants to accelerate the implementation of water quality improvements specifically through the collaborative and coordinated efforts of sustainable, regional-scale partnerships with a shared focus on water quality restoration and protection in local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay.

The SWG Program awarded more than \$11 million to 49 projects, with recipients providing nearly \$11.6 million in match. The program provides grants to organizations and municipal governments that are working to improve the condition of their local watershed through on-the-ground restoration, habitat conservation and community involvement.

Grant recipients expect to reduce pollution through infrastructures including greener landscapes and community outreach initiatives that promote native landscaping and improved practices for managing runoff.

**Source:** EPA Press Release, 9/2/2020

## **PUC to Hold Virtual Meeting of Damage Prevention Committee on Sept. 9**

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) will hold a virtual meeting of the Damage Prevention Committee (DPC) on Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 9 a.m.

Members of the public, the media and others will be able to access the virtual conference by attending the **Microsoft Teams Event**

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_ZDE3ZjU3ZDEtYzVkMy00MzYwLTgwNDYtNzBINmIzNmVmOGVk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22e0b11a02-0c94-4351-9061-f304093a5d17%22%2c%22isBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZDE3ZjU3ZDEtYzVkMy00MzYwLTgwNDYtNzBINmIzNmVmOGVk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22418e2841-0128-4dd5-9b6c-47fc5a9a1bde%22%2c%22oid%22%3a%22e0b11a02-0c94-4351-9061-f304093a5d17%22%2c%22isBroadcastMeeting%22%3atrue%7d) or by calling into the telephone conference by dialing 267-332-8737, and then entering passcode 533 468 499# to listen to the meeting. The meeting **agenda** <http://www.puc.pa.gov/transport/gassafe/pdf/DPCAgendas/2020/DPC090920.pdf> is available on the PUC's website.

#### About the DPC

The DPC is a peer-based group of 13 representatives, nominated by their industry or affiliated organization and appointed by the PUC. Creation of the committee was authorized by Act 50 of 2017, which enhances Pennsylvania's Underground Utility Line Protection Act - also known as the "One Call Law." The focus of the DPC is to reduce the number of "hits" on underground lines and utilities.

The DPC meets regularly to review alleged violations of Act 50 and make informal determinations as to the appropriate response including, but not limited to, the issuance of warning letters, mandatory training programs and/or administrative penalties. **Summaries of actions** [http://www.puc.pa.gov/utility\\_industry/transportation/pa\\_one\\_call\\_enforcement/dpc\\_agendas/Actions.aspx](http://www.puc.pa.gov/utility_industry/transportation/pa_one_call_enforcement/dpc_agendas/Actions.aspx) taken at monthly DPC meetings are available on the PUC's website.

#### Digging Safety - PA One Call

Every year, underground lines across the state are struck more than 6,000 times - which means that during the average workday a pipeline or other vital utility system is hit every 20 minutes. While underground lines are often "out of sight and out of mind," every hit poses a risk to the contractors and homeowners who are doing the digging; to utility workers and emergency responders who are mobilized when lines are struck; and to bystanders who live, work or travel near the locations of the incidents.

State law requires contractors and residents to contact **PA One Call**

<https://www.pa1call.org/PA811/Public/> at least three business days prior to excavation - triggering alerts to all utilities within an intended digging area and prompting utilities to mark where their facilities are located. Pennsylvanians can dial 8-1-1 to connect with the One Call system, while out-of-state residents or businesses can call 1-800-242-1776.

#### About the Bureau of Investigation & Enforcement

As the independent investigation and enforcement bureau of the PUC, I&E enforces state and federal pipeline safety, electric safety and motor carrier safety laws and regulations and represents the public interest in ratemaking and service matters before the PUC's Office of Administrative Law Judge. I&E has the authority to bring enforcement action, seek emergency orders from the Commission or take other steps to ensure public safety.

**Source:** PUC Press Release, 9/3/2020

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*This newsletter provides general information, not legal advice as to any specific matter. It should not be used as a substitute for appropriate legal advice.*