



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Winter 2020

Pam Snyder

50TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

HERE TO SERVE YOU!

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PA Farm Bill at work, ensuring a strong agriculture future

I was beyond pleased when the state's first-ever PA Farm Bill became a reality back in July, and thanks to legislation included in that comprehensive package, one of our local community-supported agriculture businesses has already benefited!

PA Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding joined me at Republic Food Enterprise in Fayette County in the fall of 2019 to announce the \$25,000 grant to help purchase a mobile poultry processing trailer.

My bill, **H.B. 1520**, was included in the PA Farm Bill package and created a special grant program that reimburses federal meat-inspection costs for small or new processors. These are processors that have sales less than \$2.5 million and fewer than 10 employees, or new entities that are planning to be that size.

The comprehensive package will invest more than \$24 million in our state's agriculture industry, providing opportunities and resources to expand our successful PA Preferred program, spur the creation of additional jobs and encourage the farming of high-priority crops, such as hemp, hops and hardwoods, expand animal agriculture, and implement a variety of disaster response resources.

Agriculture is our number one industry here in Pennsylvania, and having the ability to support our farmers is a huge boon to their efforts, as well as the entire sector. I remain fully committed to supporting the men and women who work each and every day to bring great Pennsylvania-grown and produced products to our tables.



Rep. Snyder with PA Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding at the site of Republic Food Enterprise in Fayette County, which received a grant as part of a special program included in the PA Farm Bill.

Working hard to get (and keep) you connected: Legislative broadband updates

Most Pennsylvanians have ready access to some form of high-speed broadband internet service, but there are thousands who find it beyond challenging to access reliable, affordable service.

We know that this lack of access places a significant burden on businesses and organizations, large and small, to be able to compete on a level playing field, and it makes it next to impossible to get potential employers to relocate to these areas.

We have students who are completing their assignments in the parking lots of their schools because they lack reliable access at home. Hospitals and health care providers can't utilize up-to-date technologies, like telemedicine. And, our farmers need this access to utilize applications that monitor milk production or how well their crops are doing in the field.

My most recent effort on this front includes the introduction of **H.B. 2055**, which would amend the state's Municipal Authorities Act to give local governments the ability to deploy a publicly owned broadband Internet network. It would enable local decision-makers to move forward in providing this service to their residents. The bill is currently under consideration in the House Local Government Committee.

Below are additional measures I've sponsored this session to expand reliable broadband access and their current status:

- **House Bill 305** would mandate the state Department of General Services to conduct a comprehensive inventory of all state department, agency, commission or institution-owned communication towers, poles, bridges and facilities to leverage existing assets to provide access to areas without broadband service. This bill passed in the House and is currently under consideration with the state Senate.
- **House Resolution 64** would establish a bipartisan, bicameral commission to provide recommendations to deploy broadband services. This measure was reported as committed from the House State Government Committee.
- **House Resolution 354** would direct the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct an audit on the compliance of telecommunications carriers with high-speed broadband universal service deployment mandates. This committee would be responsible for determining whether these carriers have fulfilled their commitments to provide broadband availability to everyone in their distribution networks as of Dec. 31, 2015, as required by Act 67 of 1993 and Act 183 of 2004. This measure is currently under consideration in the House Consumer Affairs Committee.

For more than three years, I have remained committed to bringing this much-needed and vital access to all areas of our state, especially our more rural communities, and I will not give up. I strongly believe all Pennsylvanians – regardless of where they live – must have quality, reliable broadband service.



Protecting our miners

It truly was a Christmas miracle – just before the holidays, I received word that legislation included in the federal government's spending deal would help thousands of retired miners across our state and nation.

The Bipartisan American Miners Act of 2019 secured the pensions and health care benefits of more than 50,000 miners in America, many of whom had feared losing those benefits due to recent coal company bankruptcies. The measure also shored up funding for their pensions.

Without the action and support of U.S. Senator Joe Manchin, of West Virginia, who introduced the bill, and U.S. Senator Bob Casey, of Pennsylvania, more than 13,000 miners would have lost their benefits entirely, and even more of them would have seen their pensions gutted next year.

I have and will continue to support coal miners in our community, including in Greene County, which continues to be among the top coal-producing counties in the nation. Rest assured, I will continue to fight for and support our miners and their families and ensure they have a safe, secure future.



Bill to require legislative approval before PA could join regional greenhouse gas effort

In November, I joined several of my colleagues in support of **H.B. 2025**, a measure that would require legislative approval before Pennsylvania could formally enter the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI.

Our collective response came following an executive order from the governor in October, which directed the state Department of Environmental Protection to begin the process of joining RGGI, without considering the impacts this action would have on residents and businesses.

RGGI, in effect, amounts to a carbon tax, requiring energy companies – including coal and natural gas-fired plants – to purchase allowances to continue to operate. This would lead to millions of dollars in taxes they'd be forced to pay. As a result, those same companies would leave our region, taking with them many family-sustaining jobs.

In addition, RGGI hasn't been shown to be effective in curbing carbon emissions in the nine northeastern states currently participating. In fact, it could lead to higher electricity rates across Pennsylvania.

Our state has made significant strides in reducing its carbon footprint without joining RGGI, and with the winter season upon us, we still need oil and gas production to meet our energy demands. Bottom line: Before we enter into this type of agreement, we need to have a process, and that must involve the legislature.



Pet safety reminder

Winter is also a good time to make sure we're taking care of the furry members of our families. Please follow these tips to keep them healthy (and warm) this winter:

Keep your pets indoors as much as possible. Many pets can be safe in outside temperatures with proper shelter for a short period of time, but if it's below 32 degrees, pets cannot be tethered for more than 30 minutes.

Protect their paws. Use booties or pet-safe protectants to ensure your pet's paws are not susceptible to frostbite. Always wipe your dog's feet after a walk in the snow to remove ice balls and salt deposits from the road. Salt irritates a dog's paws and can be toxic if ingested.

Keep older, arthritic pets inside. These animals should not be left outside under any circumstances. Escort the older dog outside to relieve themselves and use a leash if the yard has ice or snow. Older dogs can easily fall and seriously injure themselves.

If you're a dog owner, keep your dog on a leash. Dogs rely heavily on a strong sense of smell to figure out where they are and can easily get lost during winter storms. Snow covering the ground will make their surroundings less familiar. Keeping your dog on a leash at all times – especially during winter storms – can help stop your dog from getting lost.

Never leave your pet inside of a parked car. While most people know this rule for the summer, a parked vehicle can quickly amplify the effects of extreme weather. During the winter, it can act as an icebox and trap cold air inside.



Rep. Pam Snyder with her "granddog" Nala

Honoring our veterans



It's an honor and pleasure each year to host our veterans' appreciation event. This year, we hosted a special brunch in their honor at the Carmichaels American Legion.

This is just one way my staff and I can show our appreciation for our residents who've defended our nation with honor, and the families who have supported them.

Vaping information available

As a parent and grandparent, ensuring the health and well-being of our youngest residents is paramount. And while you may be familiar with e-cigarettes and vaping in general, what you may not know is how easily those devices can mimic innocuous items, like flash drives. That makes them easy for youngsters to hide from their parents, grandparents and guardians.

Despite claims to the contrary, these devices can have serious health consequences for our young people. My staff and I partnered with the state Attorney General's Office in speaking about the dangers of vaping at schools throughout the district. In addition, we developed a special brochure, called "Vaping and E-Cigarette Information: What You Should Know." It includes information about vaping, e-cigarette devices, health dangers associated with vaping, and several resources for youngsters and parents.

If you'd like a copy of this brochure or more information, please contact my Carmichaels office at 724-966-8953 or my Waynesburg office at 724-627-8683.



Senior Fair

I was honored to host my annual Senior Fair at the Greene County Fairgrounds in October – this is always such a fun event that I look forward to, and it provides me with an opportunity to hear from our older community residents. Seniors learned about the various programs and services available, received health screenings and enjoyed music and lunch (and a chance to win prizes)!



Don't miss my next Senior Fair, scheduled for Friday, October 2 at the Greene County Fairgrounds!



Home heating assistance program available

If you – or someone you know – is having a tough time paying home heating bills, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, is available to help.

This program offers cash grants to help with home heating bills and crisis grants to help those in need with emergency situations, such as a broken furnace or an unexpected fuel shortage.

Renters and homeowners who qualify can have a cash grant – which does not need to be repaid – sent directly to their utility company or fuel provider. Grants range from \$200 to \$1,000, based on household size, income and fuel type. Crisis grants are also available.

My office can help you file a LIHEAP application. LIHEAP information is also available by calling the LIHEAP Client Helpline at 1-866-857-7095 or by applying online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

LIHEAP applications will be accepted through April 10.





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Rep. Pam Snyder

3rd ANNUAL

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

KIDS FEST

Saturday, May 9

at the

**GREENE COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS!**



lpo.kaf.0120

Grant update

I'm pleased to provide you with a brief update on several grants awarded in the district, including:

- \$900,000 to the Greene County Redevelopment Authority to help expand the availability of affordable housing options.
- \$1 million awarded to Waynesburg University for upgrades to its state-of-the-art nursing program.
- \$1.5 million to the Greene County Industrial Development Corporation for land development and preparation to create new jobs for Greene County.
- Approximately \$322,000 from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to help victims of crime in Fayette County and support Greene County's drug court.
- \$200,000 to Masontown Borough in Fayette County to fund recreational improvements and safer access to the Monongahela River for emergency responders and residents.
- \$70,000 to Greene and Fayette counties from the Appalachian Regional Commission to assist with job creation and economic development, including broadband expansion.
- Safe School Targeted Grants to the Central Greene School District (\$23,686) and to the West Greene School District (\$20,000) to assist them with safety and security-related equipment needs.
- \$15,850 for Waynesburg Borough in Greene County toward the development of active transportation plans and policies to encourage physical activity.



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