

### **Who is Fighting for Pennsylvania's Future?**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Andrew Heath, Executive Director of Renew Growing Greener, a statewide coalition of conservation, recreation and environmental organizations, today strongly encouraged the Senate and House to stand up for Pennsylvania's future by not accepting the recent list of "one-time" transfers being offered by Governor Rendell's administration as part of the budget negotiations.

"After yesterday's revelation that the Administration is once again hanging the conservation, recreation and environmental communities out to dry, I am appealing to the leadership of the Senate and House to take a strong stand for Pennsylvania's future by protecting Growing Greener, Keystone and other long-standing environmental initiatives," Heath stated. "This is a rare opportunity for Republican and Democrats to unite over an issue that affects the lives of every Pennsylvanian and will ensure that future generations get to enjoy the special places the Commonwealth has to offer."

"The targeted programs have enjoyed strong bi-partisan support, but conservation, recreation and environmental funds seem to be the easiest targets in budget talks. As much as \$1 billion has already been cut or diverted from state environmental initiatives in the past seven years. At a time when natural gas drilling puts our state's water, air and land at risk, we cannot afford to suspend the programs that protect us," said Heath.

According to media reports released yesterday, Governor Rendell's administration is proposing a total of \$132 million in suspensions and transfers from environmental funds, including:

- 🌱 Growing Greener - \$12 million in transfers and \$29.8 million in suspensions
- 🌱 Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund - \$54.8 million in suspensions
- 🌱 Clean Air Fund - \$8 million in transfers
- 🌱 Agriculture Easement Purchase Fund - \$20.4 million in suspensions

Since 1993, the Keystone Fund has been hugely successful in creating and upgrading municipal parks, supporting community recreation, conserving critical natural areas, building trails and improving State Parks and Forests. Because the Keystone Fund leverages local investments, every dollar cut from Keystone results in the loss of two or more dollars for conservation and recreation.

In 2005, Governor Rendell and the General Assembly put a \$625 million bond referendum question to the voters for the maintenance and protection of the environment, open space and farmland preservation, watershed protection, abandoned mine reclamation, acid mine drainage remediation and other environmental initiatives. The referendum was passed with 60% approval and Growing Greener II was established.

The Renew Growing Greener Coalition consists of 22 of the state's leading conservation, recreation and environmental organizations. The Coalition's mission is to secure dedicated funding for future Growing Greener projects. For more information, contact Andrew Heath, Executive Director of the Coalition, or visit [www.renewgrowinggreener.org](http://www.renewgrowinggreener.org).