

Tom Ridge: GOP Must Do Better on the Environment



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Richard Nixon founded the EPA. Teddy Roosevelt gave us National Parks. And until fairly recently, Republican politicians were among the leading voices advocating for conservation and the environment. What happened?

Two-term Pennsylvania governor and lifelong conservative Tom Ridge raised the question in an Earth Day essay for the [Atlantic](#), taking his party to task for turning its back on the environment.

He expanded on that critique as a guest on PEC's [Pennsylvania Legacies podcast](#) last month. Citing multiple U.S. Department of Defense warnings of global instability due to climate change, the former Homeland Security director said conservatives ought to take their cues from the military and intelligence communities.

"If you don't believe the scientists, believe those in charge of your safety and security globally. And if that can't convince you, then I guess there's no convincing," Mr. Ridge said. "If the scientists and the military can't do it, I don't know who can."

Audio and a full transcript of the interview are available on the [PEC website](#). Subscribe to Pennsylvania Legacies in [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Stitcher](#), and everywhere podcasts are available.

Policy: House Bill Takes Aim at Carbon Reduction Program

On June 8, PEC and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) sent a joint [letter](#) to members of the state House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee opposing House Bill 2025, which would effectively block Pennsylvania from

establishing a carbon emissions pricing system via participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Learn why PEC and EDF are [strongly urging members to reject the measure](#).



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Remembering Gary Brown

We are sad to say that we have lost an important and respected member of the PEC family with the recent passing of Gary R. Brown, who served on PEC's Board of Directors for over 20 years and chaired the Finance Committee.

While Gary contributed greatly to our work and success during that time, his board service is only one piece of the legacy he leaves as an engineer, business leader, and citizen. In 1988 Gary founded RT Environmental Services, an environmental consulting and remediation firm, which remains one of PEC's valued partners and supporters to this day.

PEC joins RT and countless others who have known and worked with Gary over the years in expressing our deepest condolences to his family and friends, as well as our gratitude and admiration for a life well-lived.

PEC at 50: Our Story

The Pennsylvania Environmental Council was founded in 1970 to advocate for sound and responsible environmental policy. Over the years, our mission has evolved -- but our commitment has never wavered.

Join us in celebrating PEC's 50th anniversary with a look back at where we came from, and ahead to the next fifty.

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PEC Blog

Picking Up the Pieces

Reforestation work is complex and contingent even under normal circumstances -- and the circumstances surrounding PEC's 2020 spring tree-



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planting season were anything but normal.

Learn how quick thinking and strong partnerships overcame lockdowns, travel restrictions, and uncertainty to reforest more than [62 acres of legacy mine lands](#) all over the state.



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Watersheds En Plein Air

Landscape painter David McSween's motivation as an artist isn't so different from that of the many organizations, agencies, and volunteers devoted to protecting and restoring Pennsylvania's watersheds. In a very real sense, art and painting can also "preserve" a treasured landscape.

PEC Watersheds Program Manager Tali MacArthur talks with McSween about how he draws inspiration from nature, and why [artists and conservationists are natural allies](#).



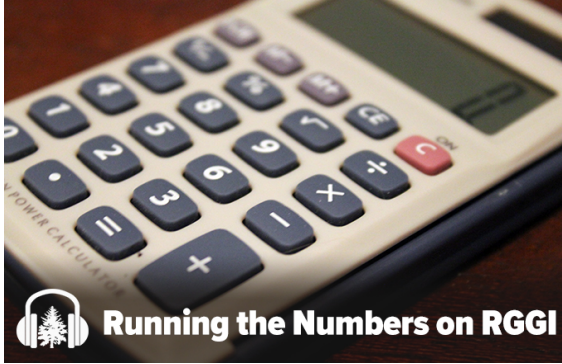
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What Do You Want in a Trail?

Over the past several months, PEC has been helping Campbell Thomas & Co. Architects, the Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership, and Cheltenham Township to gather public input on the Tookany Creek Trail proposal.

PEC Trails Program Coordinator Zhenya Nalywayko shares what he's learned about residents' [hopes, concerns, and ideas](#).

Pennsylvania Legacies



Running the Numbers on RGGI

One way or another, coal-fired power generation is on its way out. That leaves two likely scenarios for Pennsylvania's electricity sector in the next decade: a modest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions with little economic impact, or a dramatic reduction coupled with massive investment in energy innovation and efficiency.

DEP energy advisor Hayley Book breaks down the costs and benefits of membership in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) as detailed in DEP's latest statistical modeling.

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Breaking the Frame

These days, environmental issues are politically charged in a way that can make sound, commonsense policy seem unattainable. But it wasn't always like that, and it doesn't have to be.

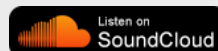
Tom Ridge, the Republican former governor of Pennsylvania, says he's an environmentalist because of — not in spite of — his conservative values.

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The Pennsylvania Legacies podcast features conversations with community leaders, experts, thinkers, and citizens on the most important environmental and conservation issues facing Pennsylvania.

New episodes are posted every other Friday at pecpa.org/audio and are available on most podcast platforms.



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PEC In the News

Times Leader

Volunteers plant trees along riverbank in Nesbitt Park

April Davies pushed her shovel into the earth along the Susquehanna riverbank and remarked with delight how easy it was to turn over.

"It's luvisol soil, all really nice river silt," Vinnie Cotrone said. "That's why farmers have always liked to plant along the river."

Davies and Cotrone, who is a Penn State Extension urban forester, weren't planting corn or tomatoes on Wednesday, but trees.



They were among a half dozen volunteers from the Suskie Bassmasters and Riverfront Parks Committee who planted a dozen red maples and a willow near the boat launch in Wilkes-Barre's Nesbitt Park, using funds from a Keep America Beautiful grant that the local Pennsylvania Environmental Council applied for and received...

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Pocono Record

Down in the dumps: Poconos seeing rash of illegal dumping

Despite the stay-at-home order that has kept Pennsylvanians cooped up for the past month, reports of littering and illegal dumping have increased drastically across the commonwealth, including Monroe County...

Janet Sweeney, director of Keep Northeastern Pennsylvania Beautiful and Vice President of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, said that she has also received reports of increased littering on state lands.

"I have also heard from several of my trail partners that there has been a noticeable increase in trail users and a corresponding increase in litter along the trails," Sweeney said. "It is very unfortunate that this resource, which is helping people cope with this situation, is also experiencing more littering by the people who are using it as a refuge of sorts. I know most of our trail partners have signed 'carry in carry out' and 'leave no trace' policies in place, but these are not always heeded."

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