Comments to the Environmental Quality Board

April 18, 2016

I submit these comments on behalf of Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future ("PennFuture") in support of the Environmental Quality Board's proposal to amend the Pennsylvania Code to provide special protection status to over 200 miles of Pennsylvania's streams. 46 Pa. Bull. 1205 (March 5, 2016); 46 Pa. Bull 1324 (March 12, 2016). Pennsylvania's water resources are essential to the Commonwealth's health and economic well-being, and they should be given the strongest possible level of protection.

PennFuture is a statewide environmental public interest organization with offices in four Pennsylvania regions, and serves as the Pennsylvania affiliate for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), one of the nation's oldest and largest wildlife conservation organizations. PennFuture's activities include advocating and advancing legislative action on a state and federal level; providing education for the public; and assisting citizens in public advocacy. PennFuture and our members are concerned with the protection of Pennsylvania's aquatic and wildlife resources and the conservation of its surface waters for future generations.

PennFuture strongly supports the addition of the stream segments listed in the March 5, 2016 Pennsylvania Bulletin announcement to the list of "High Quality" waters in Pennsylvania. Objective scientific data reveal that these streams are among the best of Pennsylvania's wild trout fisheries. Designating these stream segments "High Quality" will help provide them with an additional layer of protection to ensure that they continue to serve as a viable habitat for aquatic life. We ask that you finalize this rulemaking to provide these special waters with the protection they so richly deserve.

We also ask that you work with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to ensure that all Pennsylvania waters deserving of "special protection" status receive the appropriate designation as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments, and thank you for all of the work that you do to ensure Pennsylvanians' constitutionally protected right to "pure water." Pa. Const. art. I, § 27.

-Michael Helbing, Staff Attorney