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County of Berks – Press Release

Berks County Conservation District new permitting authority will help expediate local development

Reading, PA— 4/26/2022 — The County of Berks is pleased to announce that the Berks County Conservation District will now be able to review and process most of the new construction permitting throughout the county, providing a welcome boost to our local economic development. Previously, the Berks County Conservation District reviewed some construction and stormwater permits, but many types of permits had to be sent to the Department of Environmental Protection for processing. Earlier this year, DEP approved for the Berks County Conservation District to now have the authority to also handle general and individual post-construction stormwater reviews.

“This new authority delegated from DEP to the Berks County Conservation District will allow us to review 95% of the NPDES Permit Applications for new construction and development projects,” District Executive Dean Druckenmiller said. “The Berks CD will be able to expeditiously review these permit applications and be able to better preserve our county’s natural resources.”

Druckenmiller said this new process should help cut the turnaround time for these permits in half, if not more, helping to move new developments along at a faster overall timeline. After a nearly two-year process to receive approval, the Conservation District was able to begin utilizing the new authority immediately and is currently processing several individual permits.

“The permitting process is one of the more challenging areas of development, whether agriculture, commercial or residential, especially when it involves DEP,” County Commissioner Christian Y. Leinbach said. “Now most permits that previously had to go to DEP have been delegated to the Berks County Conservation District to review and process. This new process not only saves time, but it also means that reviews and decisions are being made by people that know Berks County. This results in more timely reviews by people that know and care about our community.”

Piperlynn Sherburne, Chair of the Conservation District Board of Directors, said this new authority helps to further the conservation district's mission to promote wise stewardship of Berks County's natural resources for future generations.

"Berks County is very fortunate to be caretaker of some of the richest soils and special designation waters in the state," Sherburne said. "The authority to locally control and mitigate flooding and storm water damage and to react rapidly after local storm events is going to put us in a position of protecting and preserving the integrity of our resources."

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