

Dear Representatives,

We, the undersigned environmental and community organizations, write in unified opposition to Pennsylvania [House Bill 502](#), introduced in the 2025–2026 legislative session. This bill, which establishes the Reliable Energy Siting and Electric Transition (RESET) Board, is an alarming attempt to centralize control over energy project siting—undermining local democracy, silencing community voices, and fast-tracking potentially harmful energy developments with minimal oversight.

This legislation is not progress. It is a blatant rollback of hard-fought protections for Pennsylvania's people and environment—reviving the same unconstitutional overreach that was struck down by our Supreme Court in the landmark *Robinson Township v. Commonwealth* decision. We urge you to reject this bill in its entirety.

### **Key Objections to HB 502:**

#### **1. Unconstitutional Preemption of Local Control**

HB 502 attempts to strip municipalities of their authority to regulate the siting of energy projects, transferring that power to a politically appointed statewide board. This directly echoes the overreach of Act 13, which the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in 2013. In that ruling, the Court reaffirmed the importance of local governance and the Environmental Rights Amendment, which obligates the Commonwealth—and by extension, its municipalities—to protect public natural resources for all people.

#### **2. Dangerous Centralization of Power**

Section 803 of the bill empowers the RESET Board to override local zoning laws, even in the face of public opposition. The ability to grant or deny "Certificates of Reliable Energy Supply" (Section 805) without clearly defined environmental standards enables political favoritism, reduces transparency, and concentrates immense influence in the hands of a few. It bypasses local democratic processes and creates a high risk of inequitable and unjust development.

#### **3. Expedited Approval, Minimal Accountability**

Section 806 imposes an accelerated permitting timeline, sacrificing thorough environmental and public health review in favor of industry speed. Section 804(d) further compounds the problem by limiting judicial review of the Board's decisions—allowing communities to challenge them only in cases of fraud or constitutional violations. This creates a nearly impenetrable barrier to holding the Board accountable for harmful decisions.

#### **4. Environmental and Public Health Harm**

HB 502 creates a statewide mechanism to fast-track energy infrastructure—without clear guardrails to prevent projects near schools, homes, or ecologically sensitive areas. By marginalizing municipalities, this bill opens the door to increased exposure to air and water

pollution, unchecked deforestation, and further climate injustice—especially in frontline and historically marginalized communities.

**This is not climate leadership. It is a corporate giveaway.**

Governor Shapiro campaigned on environmental protection, public health, and responsive governance. Instead, HB 502—tied directly to his “Lightning Plan”—serves fossil fuel interests while removing the very tools communities use to protect themselves. At a time when local governments are developing bold climate solutions, this bill cuts them off at the knees.

**Our communities will not stand by while our rights are stripped away.**

HB 502 is an attack on local democracy, environmental justice, and constitutional balance. We call on every member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly to reject this legislation and stand with the people of this Commonwealth—not with corporate polluters.

Sincerely,

Food & Water Watch

Protect Elizabeth Township

Environmental Integrity Project

No False Climate Solutions PA

Better Path Coalition

Berks Gas Truth

Concerned Health Professionals of Pennsylvania

Between the Waters

Physicians for Social Responsibility Pennsylvania

Greenfire Coalition Writers’ Forum

Fracktracker Alliance

Move Past Plastic

Delchesco United for Pipeline Safety

PASUP

Protect PT

Delaware Riverkeeper Network



Beyond Plastics

FreshWater Accountability Project

NEPA Green Coalition

Westmoreland Marcellus Citizens' Group

Earthworks

Academia

Yough Communities Care

Community Partners in Asthma Care

Allegheny County Clean Air Now