

TESTIMONY OF PENNENVIRONMENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID MASUR
PA SENATE DEMOCRATIC POLICY COMMITTEE HEARING
JANUARY 28, 2022

Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to testify before the Pennsylvania state Senate Democratic Policy Committee. I want to particularly thank Policy Chairwoman Katie Muth and Senator John Kane for inviting me to testify today.

My name is David Masur, and I am the Executive Director for PennEnvironment. PennEnvironment is a statewide, citizen-based environmental advocacy organization. We work to promote clean air, clean water, and protect Pennsylvania's incredible natural heritage and great outdoor places.

One of our largest issue areas of focus has been promoting clean energy solutions, such as wind and solar power in order to address many of the cradle-to-grave problems that are created by our current energy production systems.

That's why I'm proud to be invited to today's hearing to speak in support of the Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm Project.

Pennsylvania should be doing everything in its power to support clean energy projects like the proposed Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm. Bringing clean energy sources online is critical if we are going to address the greatest environmental threat facing the planet: climate change. We're already seeing the effects of global warming here in Pennsylvania, with extreme weather events like severe downpours, flooding, dangerous heat waves that trigger heat-related deaths and increased asthma attacks, and more recently, the threat of tornadoes across the Commonwealth.

Not only do they put our health at risk, but they are also wildly expensive for Americans: the recent study by [the US National Centers for Environmental Information \(NCEI\) showed that the 20 largest extreme weather events in 2021 alone—cost the country a whopping \\$145 billion.](#)

That's before you get to the cost of the hundreds of weather catastrophes that didn't rank in the top 20 most expensive weather events.

Given these threats, the benefits of the proposed Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm project actually delivers a win-win from the environmental and public health perspective. From a clean energy production perspective, this project is expected to produce enough clean energy to power 65,000 Pennsylvania homes each year. At the same time, the project is reclaiming a site with a long history of mining and other activities that have left the site blighted and in dire need of an effective reclamation strategy.

For these reasons, it is not surprising that nearly a dozen of Pennsylvania's premier environmental groups sent a letter supporting the Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm Project to

Governor Wolf last month, including Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Interfaith Power & Light, and the Pennsylvania Conservative Energy Forum, among others. I have included a copy of this letter with my testimony.

As you have also heard, there is broad support for this proposal due to the projected job creation that is expected to accompany this project. The project's developer predicts that the construction of this project will lead to 250 clean energy jobs in the region.

It is important to note that the Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm Project exemplifies the larger opportunity for Pennsylvania to be a leader in the clean energy economy.

In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that "wind turbine service technicians" will be the [second-fastest growing occupation in the nation between 2020-2030](#) (jobs in the solar sector rank fifth for job growth). In Pennsylvania, a recent report by Gov. Wolf's office showed that [jobs in the clean energy sector saw some of the highest growth rates in the Commonwealth](#). The study showed that job growth in the clean energy industry for Pennsylvania was 8.7%, while the state's overall job growth was just 1.9% over the same time period.

Lastly, America's top military officials and departments have been crystal clear about the need to address climate change. [The first words in the forward of the Department of Defense's Climate 2021 Risk Analysis Report](#) are, "To keep the nation secure, we must tackle the existential threat of climate change."

Given this, it shouldn't be surprising that America's military has also been on the forefront of supporting clean energy projects: while not a widely cited fact, [the Pentagon helped jump-start the U.S. solar industry back in 2007](#), when the Air Force contracted to build a 14-megawatt solar farm at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, then the largest plant of its kind in the country.

The legacy of the clean energy economy and our military are intertwined here in Pennsylvania: Clean energy jobs in Pennsylvania supports a [higher proportional percentage of US armed forces veteran employees than the greater Pennsylvania economy](#) (10.8% versus 5.2% respectively), or that of the nation as a whole (5.7%).

Given this, it's disappointing to see the opposition by Pennsylvania's national guard in regards to the proposed Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm project. This only adds to the challenges for Pennsylvania to be a clean energy leader.

As you can see, promoting clean energy projects like the Anthracite Ridge Wind Farm project is a triple win for Pennsylvania—it's good for our planet, it's good for our health, and it's one of the fastest growing job creators in the country.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to join today's hearing and testify on this important topic. I look forward to any questions that you and the committee members may have.