

**TESTIMONY
PRESENTED TO SENATOR YAW
AND THE
CENTER FOR RURAL
PENNSYLVANIA**

BY

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Good morning. My name is Joel Rotz, State Governmental Relations Director for the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. I just want to make some very brief comments on behalf of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau which represents over 53,000 family members across the state. Farm Bureau is very appreciative of Senator Yaw and the Center for Rural Pennsylvania creating this opportunity to air concerns related to stream cleaning and the impact of recent flooding. Proper maintenance of streams and the impact of stream flow impaired by sediment and debris is an ongoing concern of Farm Bureau members, but certainly the record rainfall and flooding events of 2011 have elevated the concern among farmers who are impacted.

We believe most of the impacted landowners recognize that heavy rainfalls throughout the year combined with hurricane rains in September inevitably were going to cause flooding to occur. However, how much improperly maintained streams contributed to additional damage and how much more potential damage is pending due to additional debris being added by the recent floods remains the concern.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau is conducting a survey among its membership to determine how flooding during last September's storms may have been made worse by restrictions on the clearing and maintenance of streams. PFB has sent out communications to members living in areas that were hard hit during last year's flooding. However, any member who has experienced problems because of the lack of stream cleanup is encouraged to participate. PFB is asking members the following questions: Please describe flooding that you believe was caused or worsened by impaired stream flow? ; Have you experienced problems since the flooding? ; If a permit for cleanup was necessary, was it received in a timely manner, and do you have any recommendations on what should be done to reduce problems?.

We have received some initial responses and will be happy to share with you overall results once we feel adequate time for feedback has been given. Initial responses from this part of the state point to concern of the lack of maintenance to streams since the 1972 and 1975 floods. Reports of a major increase in debris and gravel bars over the past ten years are cited. Tons of gravel blown out of stream beds is damaging highly productive fields as well as the impacts of soil erosion itself are reported. And of course, the tons of debris needing hauled from the fields at landowner expense are a real problem. Solutions for farmers seemed to be complicated by two main factors that include the fear of landowners to maintain streams themselves due to regulatory restrictions and frankly the lack of personal resources to do the job.

I don't want to take any more of the limited time we have from our members who have come here today to share their concerns. I have attached their brief testimonies for the record and will turn the microphone over to them at this time.