

**SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION**  
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**EFFORTS TO RESTORE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR  
RIVER BASIN COMMISSIONS GET MAJOR BOOST FROM  
U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE**

**Support from PA Senator Specter is key as senate committee authorizes funding in the  
2004 Water Resources Development Act – a vital step in the overall appropriations process**

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee yesterday reported out the 2004 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). As reported, the bill authorizes the Secretary of the Army to allocate funds to the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC). This committee action lends significant momentum to the efforts of the mid-Atlantic river basin commissions that have been striving since 1997 to have federal funding restored. The WRDA bill now moves to the full Senate for approval. The U.S. House of Representatives previously approved WRDA legislation containing similar language.

SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz noted that requests for funding at the federal level generally require a prior authorization before Congress will make an appropriation, making the Senate's passage of a WRDA bill containing the authorizing language a critical next step for the river basin commissions.

"In our hard fought effort since 1997 to have the federal funding restored, this is the most significant progress to date, and we are extremely encouraged," said Swartz. "The credit for this progress goes to Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter, who has been an untiring champion. We would not be at this juncture without his support."

Senator Specter said, "The SRBC and the other mid-Atlantic river basin commissions do tremendous work to protect the environment and enhance economic development. At a time of very tight fiscal budgets, we need to look for opportunities to get the most for our dollar, and these commissions have enormous value-added benefits."

From SRBC alone, the federal government has received more than \$71 million dollars to date for two water storage projects at federal flood control facilities in Clearfield and Tioga Counties in Pennsylvania, and will continue to receive more than \$2 million annually for the next 38 years. Also, SRBC's coordination of the Susquehanna flood warning system saves lives during floods and is credited with preventing \$32 million in damages annually.

The Susquehanna River Basin Compact, which was enacted in December 1970, requires its four members to provide equitable funding annually. The four members to SRBC are the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. For FY-2005, which runs from October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005, SRBC is requesting \$600,000 from the federal government for operating expenses, and an additional \$400,000 to assist the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the update of its State Water Plan.

Senator Specter said, "I will continue to work to secure funding for the river basin commissions. The work they do to protect water resources is invaluable to Pennsylvania and the entire mid-Atlantic region."

Swartz said, "The federal government created SRBC because it saw the wisdom of protecting water resources on a watershed basis, not by political boundaries. SRBC was entrusted with enormous responsibilities to help protect the environment and promote economic development. Over the years, those responsibilities have expanded, not diminished, and so we need to have the federal government be an equal, funding partner."

SRBC is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on December 24, 1970 by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

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