

Pennsylvania Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

By Rep. Joe Emrick

NAZARETH - Pennsylvania's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program was created to enhance the federal Specialty Crop Block Grant Program by establishing a state-level program for crops not currently eligible federally or that are otherwise designated as high-priority specialty crops by the Secretary.

This grant funding is to assist with the growth, certification of seed, and marketing of eligible crops including hemp, hardwoods, honey, and hops; and barley, rye, and wheat for distilling, brewing, and malting purposes only.

Uses

Projects must enhance the competitiveness of eligible specialty crops and benefit the eligible specialty crops' industry as a whole and may include, but are not limited to, projects such as: Increasing child and adult nutrition knowledge and consumption of specialty crops.

Participation of industry representatives at meetings of international standard setting bodies in which the Federal Government participates.

Improving efficiency and reducing costs of distribution systems.

Assisting all entities in the specialty crop distribution chains in developing good agricultural practices, good handling practices, good manufacturing practices and in cost-share arrangements for funding audits of such systems for small farmers, packers and processors.

Investing in specialty crop research, including organic research to focus on conservation and environmental outcomes and enhancing food safety.

Developing new and improved seed varieties and specialty crops.

Pest and disease control.

Sustainability.

Eligibility

State and local organizations, producer associations, academia, community-based organizations, and other eligible specialty crop stakeholders are eligible to apply for grants under the program. Individual producers are not eligible for this program.

Funding

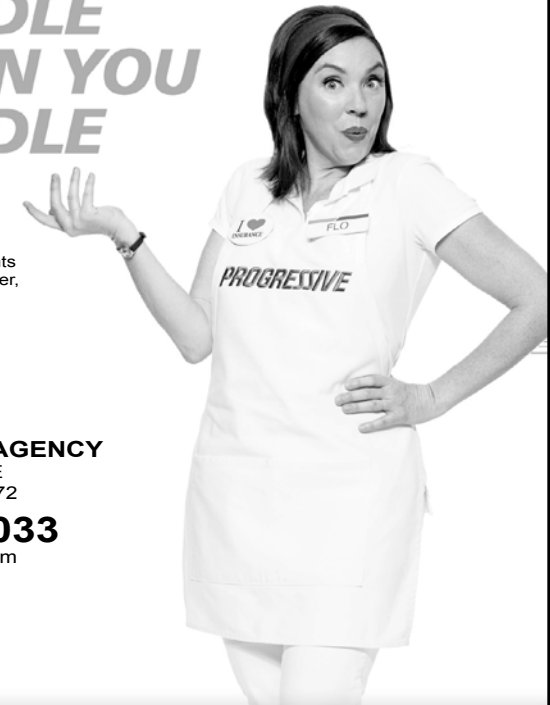
\$460,000 is available for grants under the program and will be allocated as follows:

6.2% will be allocated to recipients and projects located in rural municipalities where at least 20% of the population has been below the Federal poverty line since 1990;

3.8% will be allocated to recipients and projects located in urban municipalities where at least 20% of the population has been below the Federal poverty line since 1990;

Remaining funding after the above allocations will be allocated to recipients and projects through even distribution among eligible specialty crops, and, where practical, in a manner that distributes the funds across Pennsylvania.

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Save The Delaware Water Gap "No Jurassic Fence"

By Michael Ortoski

UPPER MT. BETHEL - On October 25th John Bermingham Chairman, UMBT Supervisors held a Community Meeting at Mt. Bethel Fire hall on "I-80 Rockfall Fence and Safety Concerns" that was well attended.

The subject was a rock wall fence proposal from New Jersey Department of Transportation that has proposed installing a (roughly) \$59.5 million dollar, half-mile long, fence along I-80, just a mile before the Pennsylvania border.



The fence, often referred to as the "Jurassic Park-style fence", is being installed to guard against potential rockfalls according to NJDOT. There is deep concern surrounding this project. First, questioning its necessity and whether or not it is the best utilization of tax-payer dollars. Secondly, a wall of this magnitude would destroy the scenic, and iconic, beauty of the Delaware Water Gap.

Lastly, this section of I-80 hosts an incredible number of commuters and tourists, and any closings or significant delays will have truly detrimental effects to our region. Particularly for a project that is estimated to last four years and coincide with the scheduled widening of Rt. 80 in Stroudsburg just a few miles up the road at the same time.

In attendance were Senator Scavello and Senator Brown who both support the communities who oppose the construction of the wall and pledged to find ways to solve the issue and coalition

leaders Chris N Tara Mezzanotte, who were getting people to sign their petition opposing the project. Mayors from two N.J. communities that will be directly effected Mayors Adele Starrs from Knolton TWSP. and Kevin Duffy from Hardwick TWSP. came to work together with their neighbor to fight the wall.

Senator Scavello said "You have to fix the real problem first, the highway" referring to moving the 'S' turn lanes that are closest to the wall further away. "I will be going to Washington with other representatives in the coming weeks to bring this issue to the forefront, let's follow the money trail."

Scavello is hoping that all parties concerned will see the economic devastation and traffic jams this project will bring along with the scheduled widening of Rt. 80 in Stroudsburg just a few miles up the road at the same time.

The large turnout greatly demonstrated the need for stronger communication and the genuine overall concern for this project.

"I've reached out to Governor Wolf requesting he and New Jersey Governor, Phil Murphy, meet to discuss this project with our transportation departments and the Federal Highway Commission to fully review the project's necessity, alternatives and impacts" said Senator Brown.

The audience got a chance to voice there opinions as the microphone whipped around the room. Sharon Davis from Senic Wild Delaware River group said her group opposes the project because their mission is the total opposite of the planned project, "protect the river and it's natural beauty of the surrounding area".

Other residents of the Portland area say the towns closest to the construction will be litterly shut down because of traffic. "No one is going to want to travel to any business in the area, it will be an economic disaster!."

"How will emergency vehicles get to accidents, fires and then to hospitals?" In the winter time where will you put the snow with only one lane opened on the north bound lane of Rt. 80? These are some of the questions that need to be answered before any money is spent on the project.



John Bermingham Chairman, UMBT Supervisors



Senator Scavello



Senator Brown



Mayor Kevin Duffy from Hardwick TWSP.



Senator Brown, Bob Kilbanks (Rep. Emrick's Office), Senator Scavello, Robert Teel, Mayor Kevin Duffy from Hardwick TWSP., Mayor Adele Starrs from Knolton TWSP., John Bermingham Chairman, UMBT Supervisors



Right - Sharon Davis from Senic Wild Delaware River group said her group opposes the project because their mission is the total opposite of the planned project, "protect the river and it's natural beauty of the surrounding area".

