

Letter from Dan Plummer:
**FUDR Asks for Five Minutes
To Support Delaware Basin Act**

May 26, 2010

Dear FUDR Friends and Supporters:

I need 5 minutes of your time. I'll explain why at the end of this letter.

I'm writing to call your attention to important proposed federal legislation that would establish a program to protect the Delaware Basin.

The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act would provide \$5,000,000 for each fiscal year from 2011 to 2016. Funds would be used to implement a voluntary, coordinated approach to sustaining and enhancing habitat, water quality and flood control improvements for fish, wildlife and people. The bill is currently in committee in the House of Representatives, and discussions are underway to introduce a companion bill in the Senate.

I don't believe there has ever been a more thoughtful, insightful proposal to make resources available to help the upper Delaware River Basin. FUDR is behind the proposal legislation 100 percent. We believe it would fund precisely the sorts of projects that we have been working on, including stream restoration. Under the act, the federal Interior Secretary would coordinate a program that would involve all four states in the basin, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. The program would include a competitive grants component to provide support for local, on-the-ground projects by non-profits, universities, state and local governments, community organizations and others. The grants could be used to support such things as wetlands restoration and protection, flood mitigation and waterfront revitalization.

The bill has the support of a number of conservation organizations.

In many ways, the Delaware River Basin has lacked a coordinated federal/state/local oversight effort, even though it is home to more than 8 million people and provides drinking water to 15 million. Other major American watersheds, including the Great Lakes and the Chesapeake Bay, get tens of millions of dollars in federal funding for conservation coordination. The Delaware Basin get relatively little funding, and the upper basin gets none.

The lack of coordination leaves the Basin vulnerable. The Delaware River is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi. Management of the river and water volume in the Basin is critical to flood control and habitat for fish and wildlife. Following three major floods in the past five years along the river, the governors of the four Basin states have called for protection of natural flood control mechanisms to combat the problem.

Existing programs have limited resources to fully address the habitat, recreation and water challenges in the Basin in a coordinated manner.

The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (H.R. 4698) was introduced on Feb. 25 by U.S. Rep. Michael Castle (R-Del.) and has bipartisan co-sponsorship by U.S. Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-N.Y.), Rush Holt (D-N.J.), Charles Dent (R-Pa.) and Joe Sestak (D.-Pa.).

So here's where I need those 5 minutes of your time.

It is vital for individuals, municipalities and organizations within the Delaware Basin to contact their federal representatives to voice support for the legislation. You can find a list of Basin congressmen at the Northeast-Midwest Institute website at www.nemw.org/delaware. Please visit your congressman's website and send an email thanking them for supporting H.R. 4698, the proposed Delaware River Basin Conservation Act. (These days, politicians prefer emails to old-fashioned letters. Their websites make it very easy to comment via email, generally under the "Contact" icon.)

This is a great opportunity for us to draw long overdue funding and attention to our vital and precious natural resource.

Thank you.

Dan Plummer
FUDR Board Chairman