

Get Involved in the Legislative Process

Citizen action really does make a difference, and it is important to get involved in the process in order to shape its outcome. Decisions regarding Pennsylvania policies and relative to gas and coalbed methane are generally handled in the state legislature. In addition to the information provided below, each of our organizations regularly communicate with our contacts regarding key pieces of legislation, opportunities for public involvement in the legislative process, and can serve as resources in aiding you with setting up meetings or communicating with your elected officials. See our Web sites or call for more information.

Center for Coalfield Justice: www.coalfieldjustice.org or 724-229-3550

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future (PennFuture): www.pennfuture.org or 412-258-6681

Mountain Watershed Association: www.mtwatershed.com or 724-455-4200

How to Find Your State Legislators

Every citizen in Pennsylvania is represented in the state's General Assembly by both a state senator and a state representative. To determine your elected officials, visit the General Assembly's Web site at: www.legis.state.pa.us and enter your zip code in the upper right hand corner ("Find Members").

How to Find Information on Pending or Prior Legislation

Visit the General Assembly site as listed above, and follow the links under "Legislation." There is also a wealth of information on this site related to state government, processes, history, and services. PennFuture features a "Legislation to Watch" section of the Web site at www.pennfuture.org; just click on "Legislation & Policy."

Legislative Committees

In order for bills to become laws, they generally must first be assigned to and voted on/passed out of at least one legislative committee. In many cases, bills may pass through more than one committee before coming to the full House or Senate for a vote. Once a bill passes one house, it retains its original bill number and is referred to the other house for their consideration. Legislation must pass *both* the House and Senate and be signed by the Governor in order to become law. As such, it is often important to communicate with members of relevant committees and their chairs (who have complete control over what legislation receives a hearing or is considered for a vote in committee).

For matters pertaining to gas and coalbed methane, the Environmental Resources and Energy Committees in both the House and Senate are usually the first stop for legislation. You can find contact information, chairs, and all members for both committees on the General Assembly Web site under "Committees" in each menu for "House" and "Senate." You can also find committee meeting schedules under "Session Information."