

**JOHN A. LAWRENCE**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
13<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

**HARRISBURG OFFICE**  
P.O. BOX 202013  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120  
(717) 260-6117

**JENNERVILLE OFFICE**  
1 COMMERCE BLVD., SUITE 200  
WEST GROVE, PA 19390  
(610) 869-1602

John Hallas  
Director of Pennsylvania State Parks  
400 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17105

April 1, 2024

Dear John –

I write regarding several concerns surrounding last week’s meeting of the Big Elk Creek Advisory Committee.

There was an excessive display of force at the meeting. There were nearly as many DCNR employees as committee members. Positioning armed rangers at the door of the Baptist Meeting House was excessive.

A sitting Chester County Commissioner was denied entry to the meeting, while another sitting Chester County Commissioner was permitted entry.

You repeatedly referred to the “opposition” and alluded that individuals serving on the committee were part of the “opposition.” Frankly, I found this appalling. No committee member appointed by a local stakeholder has any desire other than the best long-term interests of Big Elk Creek.

The topics for the committee’s consideration were largely preordained by DCNR. I and others serving on the committee raised other valid concerns for consideration. These additional concerns must be included in future discussions.

As I stated at the meeting, the knowledge and experience brought to this committee by the individuals appointed by local stakeholders is remarkable. DCNR has lost significant credibility with the local community as a direct result of its repeated missteps with the Big Elk property over the past two years. This committee is an opportunity to turn that tide, but only if DCNR actually listens to what it says on behalf of the local community.

As I noted in my letters to you dated November 7, 2023, and January 16, 2024, a great deal of controversy, angst, and turmoil can be avoided if DCNR simply announces that they have heard the will of the community, and will revert to maintaining the Strawbridge parcels as a Preserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Lawrence', with a long, sweeping underline.

John Lawrence  
State Representative  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania