

**GREENE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE 45-DAY COMMENT PERIOD**

I'm writing to express my concerns about the Draft Greene County Comprehensive Plan.

It is too one-sided towards the energy (extraction) industry and not renewable energy. The extraction industry is destroying existing roads & infrastructure, and I do not believe they can or will be restored to their original state.

We cannot keep Greene County green with the amount of energy extraction going on! It is a "turnoff" for any newcomers of new residents into Greene County!

Submitted by: Chris Paluti, Waynesburg, PA

For families who have children in school for the next ten years:

What part of your plan addresses the coal reserve taxes that are disappearing every year that will affect our schools? How do you plan on finding the replacement monies to keep our district schools up to date with student educational needs going forward?

My daughter asked this question and she tells me this uncertainty is on many parents' minds. In order to attract residents it is important to have good schools.

How can we work on this problem so that it is not a problem? How will this plan support new initiatives as they become available?

Submitted by: Colleen Nelson, Holbrook, PA

Why are the projects I sent on April 23, 2019 not listed as CDBG projects in the Comp Plan or not listed at all? The Source is either listed as Public or Township but DCED was the source and the County CDBG Program was the Contributor? I see others listed as Grant or Pennvest etc. Also, I didn't see Braves Rehab listed?

Actually it seems the plan is a little weak on the water/sewage side of things. The Community Development Block Grant Program is not even mentioned or the White Knight initiative; the partnership with PennVest/SPWA and the County. I'm not complaining that my program is not mentioned, it just seems to me that the past few year the Commissioners focus on this program and the 2.25M in water and sewer projects funded in just this past year are worth mention. Mostly because this is the only funding source that provides 100% grant funds for water and sewer and almost completely funds itself.

Submitted by: Crystal Simmons, Manager, Greene County Community Development Block Grant Program

As you well know, our organization, the Harry Enstrom Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America is acutely aware of the environmental conditions that exist within Greene County. We are greatly concerned with the lack of concern within the draft 2019 Comprehensive Plan for issues that involve water, air and health.

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It is obvious that you have placed all of your “eggs” within another fossil fuel industry. While coal was the lifeblood of the region for many years, it is now one of the worst contributors to environmental pollution. The plan is completely reliant on the oil and gas industry which we have already seen as a boom and bust industry. There is absolutely nothing to encourage the growth of renewable energy. And at the same time, wind and solar are outpacing job growth over the fossil fuel industries.

The idea of downstream industry is just another “dagger in heart” of the environment and overall health of Greene County. This will not only be an additional danger to our water resources but it will be an extreme danger to our air and health of all of the county residents. If you want an example of a petrochemicals plant effect on the residents, just look to “Cancer Alley” in Louisiana. The initial job growth is short lived but the health effects of a plant will be for generations.

An additional area of concern is the plans usage of the Wisecarver property. While the idea of a softball field complex might be useful to the county, we believe it would be prudent to clean the entire area up and make it more available to kayaking and fishing. There are numerous groups within the county that would assist in this endeavor.

Finally, you have already identified the county at or near the bottom of health issues within the state. Job creation should not be at the expense of the health and wellbeing of our children and our children’s children. And this plan will lock the county into years of another industry who holds little to no regard for their future.

Please table this plan and take the time to place the environmental and health concerns for the county as a priority to be worked in conjunction with job creation not solely based on the fossil fuel industry and fossil fuel corporations. Now is the time to place renewables at the heart of the future of the county. Now is the time to agree with the state constitution, that Pennsylvania residents are guaranteed the right to pure water and clean air.

Submitted by: Dallas J Slagle, Harry Enstrom Chapter (Greene County) of the Izaak Walton League of America

I’m writing to express my concerns about the Draft Greene County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the policy guide for decisions about growth, future development and redevelopment, services and resource management in Greene County. Ultimately, all of these decisions and many others translate into the built environment that Greene County residents, such as myself, experience every day and our way of life in the County. A good comprehensive plan that has earned the support of the community is one of the most effective tools planners have in implementing positive change in our communities. Great places to live, work and recreate are not created by accident. Communities make choices every day about what type of places they will become. These choices are incremental. The comprehensive plan provides guidance to ensure that our incremental choices create the final result we desire. The comprehensive plan is a roadmap to our desired destination and it is imperative that we get this right.

Greene County does not have to choose between jobs and the environment. Quite the opposite: a healthy environment is a stimulus for a healthy, diverse economy. Greene County should focus on navigating from being dependent on a few extractive industries to having a modern, widely diversified economy that provides a quality of life that many people find attractive. The economic fate of Greene

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County does not need to rest solely, or even predominantly, on the coal and natural gas industries. Greene County can overcome the decline in coal extraction and realize job and income growth by making the County a place where people want to live, work and raise a family. As the County attracts new workers and households, it also attracts new investment that creates jobs and incomes. As long as the county is able to provide a quality of life that many people find attractive, it will continue to prosper. As the quality of life becomes more important to Greene County's economy, the economy will become less dependent on natural resource extraction and we will start to see a shift in the economic role that natural resources play. Our natural landscapes do not need to generate new jobs and incomes primarily by being warehouses from which we extract commercial products that are exported out of the County. These natural landscapes can generate more new jobs and income by providing natural-resource amenities – water and air quality, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and the fish and wildlife – that make Greene County an attractive place to live, work and do business. People will move to this region and remain here because they want to enjoy its high-quality living environment. That growth in population will stimulate the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones.

The County must make efficient, effective investments in education. The Draft Comprehensive Plan correctly identifies the need to address declining enrollment in the five public school districts due to general regional population decline and an increase in residents choosing cyber charter or private schools. In order to address this issue, the Draft Comprehensive Plan suggests limiting cyber student's participation in extracurricular activities. This is the wrong incentive. The County should instead identify why students are choosing cyber school over attending brick and mortar schools in the County and then seek to address those issues. By addressing those issues, the County will achieve its objective of incentivizing students to attend brick and mortar schools without punishing our younger generation.

The comprehensive plan should set forth meaningful strategies and markers for success in each of the pillars. Although the Draft Comprehensive Plan includes various strategies and benchmarks for success, the strategies for one pillar sometimes undermine the goals in another pillar. For example, taking away after school activities for some students in the County would be counterproductive to the County's efforts to address the opioid crisis. By way of further example, quality of life and the County's ability to attract young families may suffer as a result of an economic development plan that over-emphasizes natural gas extraction and use. The County Planning Commission must be more thoughtful in developing strategies and measures of success for each of the pillars. These serve as the road map to get us to our desired destination.

The Draft Comprehensive Plan should be significantly revised and in addition for full transparency, the county commissioners should make public comments from residents to ensure the final plan is incorporating all the input from residents. In order to ensure that the final Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's vision, I urge the Greene County Planning Commission to host additional public meetings.

Submitted by: Donna Cooper, Clarksville, PA; Laura Mitter, Perry Twp, PA; Lois Bower-Bjornson, Scenery Hill, PA; Robert Hanham, Carmichaels, PA; Tracy Pekar, Bobtown, PA; Veronica Coptis, Carmichaels, PA; Wendy Saul, New Freeport, PA

I have several concerns about this Plan. First, I have a question about the Plan versus the Plan of 2008. By your description in the Comprehensive Plan of 2018, the comprehensive plan is a guide to the County Board of Commissioners.

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“A comprehensive plan is the County’s official statement of its vision, goals and objectives as well as the guide for the future development. It serves as a reference point for the Greene County Board of Commissioners development and budget decisions and capital improvements priorities. It is a guide for private-sector decision-making and provides guidelines for planning commission reviews of subdivision and land development applications. It is the basis for the County’s land use regulations and updates”

With that said the Comprehensive plan of 2008 had many many pages. This Plan of 2018, which by the way is very delayed, has a few pages. I would like to know the top ten items from the Plan of 2008 that the Board of County Commissioners have addressed. I want to know what the commissioners have improved or met the items in the Comprehensive Plan of 2008. This is not including private or corporate items; this is only things that the county commissioners have met as was intended in the previous plan. This does not include a balanced budget with Act 13 money, which is forbidden by the rules of Act 13.

Another concern I have is that you list, number 19, under the use of Act 13 Paperless technologies. What exactly have you done to make County records paperless? All records that are public records should be available online to the public. The few records that are available have to be paid for. That is unacceptable, they are paid for by our tax dollars. They are paid for by charges by the County at property sales, taxes, and the many other fees that are charged. In this day and age of technology all public records should be available to the public. In other areas, other than Greene County, this type of records has been available to the public online. Tax records, sales of property, gas and oil ownership, etc. should be available. Availability of the gas and oil ownership could help the citizens do better with their leases with companies. If we as a property owner go to the office to investigate ownership of oil and gas or coal rights, the employees are not there to assist you. They direct you to books that lead to other books. All to find out that there is an entry that you are referred to and that the page number was not completed. The employee states “well there is no way to follow any further.” This is not acceptable; our taxes pay for these services. Online records should be complete and available to each and every one of us. The people that are employed by our taxes should know how to find answers in their files. I know this does occur because it happened to me when I moved back to the County and purchased property. So, what have you done over the last ten years to make county records available to your citizens? How many of the records are really freely available to us as tax payers in the County of Greene?

Submitted by: Faye VanDevender

In 2016 I started an online store at Etsy, and I'm pleased to say that, in spite of my health problems, I have been successful enough to contemplate bringing on additional employees, both for production and book-keeping. Although my sales fluctuate with my health, my shop has been in the top 5% on Etsy during it's peak sales, and I've had multiple inquiries about wholesaling my items, and have sold to customers from all over the world.

When I went looking for advice and support on growing my business, I was extremely frustrated and discouraged. There is no SCORE program in Greene County - which is a mentoring program for people starting their own business. There was no one at the Extension Office who could offer me advice on book-keeping or accounting software. There was no one who could advise me about registering my business, applying for my wholesaler's license, or how to pay taxes. I contacted the Small Business Development Council out of the University of Pittsburgh, but their mandate was too narrow for my business model.

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I do not think my experience is unusual. In the last few years I've seen several small businesses start and fail here in Greene County. These were hard-working people with the get-up-and-go to take on all the hard work and risk that comes with owning your own small business, and who might have succeeded with the right advice and support. The first few years in any business are the most vulnerable - there's a learning curve, and your cash-flow is much more limited. Once you make it through the first few years, you are much more robust, and the possibilities for expansion become exponential. If Greene county developed a suite of support services for budding entrepreneurs, it could serve as an incubator, and who knows what they might grow into, given time. I look at Soergel's Orchards, and remember a time when they were just a small nursery, but have expanded into a thriving business which attracts people all the way from Pittsburgh. There is no reason why that couldn't happen here in Greene County, too.

In my wildest dreams - I imagine a sort of artists and creator's community - a building with shared office and studio space, with access to the internet, where they could sell their items to the huge market that is available through the internet. With a small postal center where people could buy packaging materials and post their merchandise. and shared book-keeping and inventory services, childcare, food services (like a small food court), and perhaps even a small merchandising center or possibly even tours for people who are interested in seeing artists and creators at work. These shared work spaces are showing up in urban centers, and drawing younger people who are turning to non-traditional work. And the accumulated experience of all those business people might be the biggest asset of all - providing a one-stop mentorship program for other people, like myself, who have had to struggle and scrape, and learn things the hard way. And waste precious time and resources exploring avenues that don't pay off.

By nurturing the entrepreneurs in our community, we can help build a diversified economy, that brings money into our area by accessing the larger market available through the internet. We could reach markets through social media that might bring tourists to our area, and create possibilities for local restaurants and Bed and Breakfasts. If we begin building now, then we might have some robust and well-established businesses, which, like mine, might take unexpected directions, and grow into things that are far beyond what we can even imagine.

Submitted by: Frankie Alcorn

Page 17

Workforce & Education

Issues Considered – “16 licensed public cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania”

How many in Greene County and how many Greene County students in public cyber charter schools?

What is the financial impact to Greene County School Districts?

Page 19

Quality of life

“Promoting good stewardship” Content has political flavor.

“Encourage and educate residents to promote a county-wide recycling program and try to get all municipalities to participate” (Which ones do and which ones don't) Ideas on how to improve?

Greene County Housing Plan identifies a need for the following types of housing” – What is the plan?

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Page 20

“Attracting and maintaining a younger population base”
Agree with statement. How do we change, steps, action plan.

“Targeting growth” -“Controlled growth should be identified”
Haven’t we already done this? It should exist. List.

Page 21

Local Government

“Establishing uniformity in municipal regulations”

What are the incentives? What have been the obstacles of not already accomplishing? Why hasn’t the Jefferson-Morgan concept expanded?

Page 23

Expand Broadband

“Map & Categorize”

Strategy 2: Doesn’t this already exist

Page 25

Strategy 1

“Explore options for school district consolidation”

Past studies have been done recommending consolidation. Identify past obstacles. Incentivize Consolidation.

Page 27

Expand Economic Opportunities

Strategy 1

“Develop a one stop shop”

We did in 2008. Why are we restating? If it didn’t work, why? What do we need to change?

Page 31

Strategy 1 & 2

“Assist municipalities with developing financial packages to fund infrastructure expansion.”

Currently exist. Identify why it is ineffective. Possible solution – Need to provide the expertise and coordination to the municipalities. Develop a team.

Page 41 Benchmarks

“A physical location for the consolidated one-stop shop is identified.” Per 2008 plan, county implemented. “The marketing campaign,” What do we currently have? “New county website” Isn’t this already done?

Page 1 of 4 Appendix

Draft Goals and Strategies for all Focus Groups, Business & Industry,
Goal 2, Strategy F: Should already have.

Submitted by: George Scull

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INTRO:

I moved to Greene County in 1989 when I was 25 yrs old. I grew up in Westport, CT, in Fairfield County. I still to this day cannot imagine a more stark contrast between the cultural, socio-economic and educational influences on a community member living in each of these two different zip codes, 06880 / 15370. Yet, when all my comparisons and analyses are done, I ask myself, Where have I chosen to live, to work and to raise my family? Greene County holds my heart!

This then begs the next question, What keeps me here? The answer to this question is what guides me in shaping my comments that I will share below: the natural, environmental beauty of the rolling green hills. Nestled within this rural, undulating countryside of ridges, valleys and riversides, are quaint, small, closely-knit towns, each with their own special character, which support their community of hard working, “salt-of-the-earth”, genuine people, many of whom are struggling financially, yet who all share a common identity. People in Greene County generally love living here and take pride in it’s rural identity - or else they would move! They love their families, their friends, their homes, their community sports events, etc. whether they are “in town” or farther out in the county, AND, most pertinent to my livelihood, they truly love their animals – large and small! I am a veterinarian and I own Waynesburg Animal Hospital, a thriving small business that has proudly employed nearly 50 Greene County residents over the past 30 years.

NOTES FOR REFERENCE ABOUT the 2008 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

- 2008 - Vision Statement for 2020 - was MORE detailed, inclusive and highlights what makes Greene County special. EMPHASIS not solely on extractive industries (which was ready to ROLL OVER Greene County in the ensuing 10 YEARS). It reads as follows:

“Greene County has expanded its economy through the development of the energy and extractive industries; diversified workforce; targeted expansion of infrastructure; and the provision of basic community services. Residents can choose from numerous housing options including, family homesteads, quaint village developments, or urban-style living. Working in collaboration across municipal and county lines, Greene County’s leaders have increased its technological capabilities and tourism that celebrates its mining and agriculture heritage and rural landscape. With the interstate and highway system as its foundation, Greene County has a multi-modal approach that encompasses connections to the regional trail and transit network, providing mobility and accessibility to outlying urban centers. The Monongahela River enhances the county’s transportation system and serves as a conduit for recreational and economic activities. As the cornerstone of Pennsylvania, Greene County provides a wonderful place to live by offering first-class healthcare, a high quality education system, family-supporting jobs, and an abundance of shopping, recreation, and entertainment. ***Hills are scattered with grazing livestock and valleys are traversed by pristine waterways, preserving the rural nature that residents and visitors cherish.***

- 2008 Strategy for a Greene Tomorrow - it referenced the Keystone Principals & Criteria for Growth, Investment & Resource CONSERVATION which are:
 1. Redevelop FIRST

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2. Provide Efficient Infrastructure
3. Concentrate Development
4. Increase Job Opportunities
5. FOSTER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESSES
6. RESTORE AND ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT
7. ENHANCED RECREATIONAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCES
8. Expand Housing Opportunities
9. Plan Regionally; Implement Locally
10. Be Fair

The 2008 Plan then advises that the Strategy for a Greene Tomorrow should be used in the following manner:

1. Support of Future Plans/Studies/Ordinances - ...recommends MANY plan updates, ORDINANCE Updates, and STUDIES to be developed at the County or local level. The County will encourage and provide technical assistance for plan updates or studies that implement the County Comprehensive Plan.
2. Plan Review - The County will rely on Strategy for a Greene Tomorrow to review development plans, MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS, or ORDINANCES to ensure compatibility with the County's vision.
3. etc...

Areas of Concern for Greene County:

Declining Population - Good families and long time residents are leaving Greene County for better educational opportunities for their children, for a peace of mind and healthier attitudes for their own quality of life, and certainly for better, more progressive job opportunities. The health of a community depends on a thriving young population, available jobs and career pathways, as well as an ability to sustain a quality of life for our seniors.

More Transient Population - Some individuals and families are entering the County revolving around temporary work in the extractive industries.

Quality of Education - focus has been on Cost-Cutting in 5 separate school districts that are facing similar problems, rather than working together to find common solutions and targeted innovations that would ENHANCE AND ELEVATE the level of education. The move toward cyber-schooling seems to be used as an alternative for students who are having problems or issues in the public schools RATHER than focusing on possible behavioral and mental health support that so many students need - ESPECIALLY if they are not in a supportive environment at home. Cyber-Schooling in a detrimental home "learning" environment does not seem to be a healthy alternative unless students can possibly collectively cyberschool in an alternative learning site..? But capital put towards alternative learning also further undermines the attention that the public schools desperately need.

Degradation of Greene County's best asset - the ENVIRONMENT/COMMUNITY BEAUTY - one needs only to drive around on all of our special, windy, country backroads to realize the juxtaposition of the positive new changes in homes and farms that have received Marcellus well money vs. the blight of old

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abandoned, bought-out homes that are overgrown and boarded up as you drive on pot holed, damaged roads, roads with still paved dangerous subsidence/slips, detours and dangerous, loud roadways traversed by caravans of heavy trucks and equipment.

Spending of Discretionary Income and leisure time by individuals and families OUTSIDE of Greene County - lack of dining, shopping, recreation and entertainment venues

Lack of County Emphasis on - Quality of life in Greene County, the health and well-being of the community members, the community character, progressive lifestyle changes, and the beauty of the environment - not to mention the NEED for PRESERVATION of healthy soils, grasses and trees for animals, agriculture, agritourism, lush healthy hillsides, the NEED for quiet, dark night skies, flourishing wildlife, and CLEAN WATER AND AIR, all undermined by the extractive industries that Greene County is dependent on, the noise and light pollution, the lack of COUNTYWIDE recycling initiatives, and LACK of renewable energy initiatives and sustainable practices.

Comments/Suggestions for the Plan Draft

1. Vision Statement, entitled **A Greene Vision 2030** is as follows:

“Greene County will enhance its competitive economic position in the region by building upon its strengths (WEAK WORD), unparalleled natural resources, a rich industrial heritage and small-town charm and family values” (WHILE.....?)

Concerns: *There is NO MENTION of balancing economic growth with preservation or protection of all of the positive attributes of Greene County that the extractive industries, which this Plan is BUILT upon, seriously jeopardizes and/or compromises, or in some cases destroys (RYERSON PARK). The 2008 Plan actually did a better job at outlining this issue as a priority: In 2008, the Plan reads, “The intent of the Greene County Vision Statement and corresponding Implementation Guide is to lay out a path to sustainability, protect the unique quality of life and natural environment, and position Greene County to remain strong and competitive in the global economy.”*

My question to the team overseeing this 2019 Comprehensive Plan is - IF it WAS a priority in 2008 as mentioned, and the areas of concern that I listed above have all become worse in the years from 2008 - 2019 - HOW DOES THIS PLAN ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IF IT IS NOT EVEN LISTED AS A PRIORITY in the vision statement MOVING FORWARD? No one likes to be in the regulatory, monitoring, overseeing, enforcing, “holding accountable” roles, but it needs to be incorporated in the plan somewhere... Otherwise the Boom/Bust Scenario will continue.

2. PAGE 6 - Introduces the “Live Greene, Work Greene, Love Greene” slogan update.

Concerns: *The slogan is enmeshed in the history of Greene County as it has utilized it’s natural resources from timber to coal to... yes, only Natural Gas is implied. However, with a forward vision, Greene County should also be innovative enough to proactively include new energy sectors, such as wind, solar, etc. Instead, it lauds the “time is of the essence” mentality - why? Because the gas and oil industries are always miles ahead of County planning - their profits depend on it.*

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Are we hurrying for the good of this industry when the precious shale and other geologic treasures are not going anywhere? IS it simply that the proverbial “Marcellus Tail is Wagging the Dog”? The community members and this place we all call home should be the priority before moving at a speed to accommodate the industry, leaving the potential detrimental consequences in its wake. Greene County is still trying to recover from the deleterious effects of coal mining. It seems the point of leverage in collaborating with these industries is BEFORE (which has long since passed us in most areas), DURING (which is where we are) and NOT AFTER (which places us in the clean-up, no tax base to recover from, position). I appreciate expediency with the Early Action programs, and that “the contributors want their vision, work and participation to continue without pause”, I would just like to see this section speak to putting the people and our lifestyles as a priority in how it is worded... as it is, it is simply slogan-y to me.

3. PAGE 18 - BUSINESS & INDUSTRY PILLAR

Concerns:

As environmental issues take more of a center stage nationally and globally, touting PLASTICS (as in the Capitalizing on energy production section) can be a hard pill to swallow. If all of the residents of Greene County are to be subjected to the hardships of having the extractive industries in their communities, as well as to realizing the benefits that are being touted for all (which has actually had a more subtle psychological effect of pitting the Marcellus lease holder beneficiaries against the nonlease holders...), then it would be easier to reconcile if the actual by-products of the extractions helped our local community and greater society, as well as the environment as a whole, rather than polluting the world we live in. Again, WHERE ARE THE BALANCING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIES INCLUDED IN THIS PRIORITY PILLAR? I am a SMALL BUSINESS owner. IT IS A SHAME THAT SMALL BUSINESSES ARE NOT EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED IN THIS SECTION... It is widely acknowledged that income inequality is exacerbated by the corporate profit business model. To only welcome in Corporate entities without even acknowledging Small Businesses as the backbone of small communities is an Oversight that someone should be held accountable for in the development of this Plan.

4. PAGE 19 - QUALITY OF LIFE PILLAR

Concerns: I appreciate the efforts that went into this pillar. I think acknowledging that Greene County ranks #62 out of #67 for **Health** Outcomes and #63 out of #67 for Health Factors highlights it’s need for attention from the County. It is both sad and frustrating that more cannot be initiated, or addressed in more detail in this plan.

Since my livelihood depends on the health and well being of both the people and the animals in this community, this section is one of the most important to me. Keeping the health of our environment, including ENSURING **clean air** and **clean water**, and REDUCING noise and light pollution should be a priority.

This Comprehensive Plan should acknowledge the need for municipal **Noise** Ordinances. With the increase of heavy equipment trucks traveling day and night up our roads, the noise levels in our quiet county have increased exponentially. I understand that commercial operations are often exempt from most noise ordinances in towns and cities, but new ideas need to be circulated.

This Comprehensive Plan should focus on **Light Pollution**. Many of us live in Greene County because of the benefits of rural living - including nature, wildlife, and dark night skies. People obviously need light

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and electricity, but we need environmentally responsible lighting. Advances in energy savings with new light bulbs is a good thing. But, all of us have experienced the detrimental effects of inappropriately placed, or aligned LED lights. These lights are searingly bright and their effects travel great distances. Even minor changes, especially with proper light shielding, glare, light pollution and carbon emissions are minimized, thus saving money. This needs the County's attention for the following reasons:

1. Energy Waste and Carbon Emissions - As quoted from the International Dark Sky Association website, darksky.org , "IDA estimates that at least 30% of all outdoor lighting in the U.S. alone is wasted, mostly by lights that aren't shielded. That adds up to \$3.3billion and the release of 21 million tons of carbon dioxide per year! To offset all that carbon dioxide, we'd have to plant 875 million trees annually.
2. Negative Effects on Wildlife, including bird migration patterns, amphibians, insects and mammals.
3. Crime and Safety - In Greene County, with all of its industrial development and even garage/vehicle/storage unit expansion, searing LED lights are installed around structures "for protection". It directly impacts surrounding residents' quality of life in this rural county. In addition, there is no clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crime. Glare can actually create shadows for hiding, etc. Glare can also be dangerous for pedestrians and drivers. It shines into our eyes, constricting our pupils, altering vision.

In the **2008 Strategy for a Greene Tomorrow** referenced in the beginning of this letter, it's Plan promoted **Support of Future Plans/Studies/Ordinances** and Plan review strategies that would oversee/review development plans, MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS, or ORDINANCES to ensure compatibility with the County's vision. Can this 2019 plan reference this as well? However, if so, then oversight MUST be done. I live in Franklin Township and I was dismayed to learn that their last Comprehensive Plan was in 1989!!!! WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS FAILURE AND HOW WILL IT BE AVOIDED IN THE FUTURE?

I truly believe we need a **COUNTYWIDE Recycling program**. There is no reason that Greene County cannot be an example, or leader for all other counties in this effort. It needs more attention. I do appreciate the township "dump" days and electronic recycling. Cleaning up "the hollows (or hollers)" where things get dumped directly impacts the health of animals and people. **Tetanus** is a disease still found in Greene County...this is a direct result of dumping and garbage in hidden areas, hence contaminating the soil and affecting water runoff into adjacent properties.

Community and animal health initiatives would be welcomed with special education and attention focused of the prevention of **Rabies** infections in wild animals causing a risk to pets, livestock and people.

Community and animal health initiatives involving the rampant spread of **Lyme Disease** in the County is of utmost importance. This is a zoonotic disease spread by deer ticks whose numbers have increased dramatically with the ever present threat of climate change affecting animal population and insect vector proliferation.

5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT SECTION - I understand that this section was included because the PA MPC requires that the county comprehensive plans address the following: Identify land uses as they relate to important nat'l resources, etc; Identify current and proposed land uses which have regional impact and significance, etc.; IDENTIFY A PLAN FOR THE PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

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OF PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND AND ENCOURAGE THE COMPATIBILITY OF LAND USE REGULATION WITH EXISTING AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS.

Concern: *This section was devoted entirely to the energy sector. The third requirement was not addressed at all. These paragraphs ON PAGE 32 should be reevaluated. This last paragraph is what is wrong with this plan in general.... Yes, we need the energy industry, but with a smart strategic approach that emphasizes that the people, community and environment come first. This last paragraph ACTUALLY implies ... THE GOAL FOR GREENE COUNTY is to let the energy companies come in TO DISTURB THE LAND DURING EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION, and THEN to RESTORE IT to ensure its rural character...and so is up to the MUNICIPALITIES to plan and REGULATE TO minimize (NOT PREVENT?) these disruptions and then to RESTORE EVERYTHING through the enactment of ORDINANCES that address zoning, noise (but commercial operations are exempt??), road bonding and buffers. I think Greene County deserves a better plan than that.*

How are all of these ordinances and regulations that the municipalities are supposed to put in place ENFORCED?? I would expect a County Comprehensive Plan that is basing its economy solely on the gas and oil industry to at least have suggestions on how all of these different municipalities are supposed to work with, and also identify which, local, regional and state regulatory bodies. Isn't there any way to clarify who is responsible for overseeing these industries and who regulates and monitors them to ensure the safety, health and happiness of all of its community members and the environment?

These extraction industries are **already here** and the disruption is already occurring. It is my sincere hope that this Plan can be also be a safety net the community members and the environment. Instead it seems like a invitation for the industry to continue its progress with the municipalities left to regulate, monitor and clean up? I know this is how things have been here for decades, and there are undoubtedly economic benefits for the entire county, but surely we can bring the people of our community a smarter approach and more hope for a Greene future.

CONCLUSION:

When I embarked on this task of giving feedback on this 2019 Comprehensive Plan DRAFT, it was my intention to present my comments, questions and suggestions in an objective, organized manner. It quickly became a more monumental task than I had anticipated, and I fear some of the organization has waned as the pages accumulated. I hope that there are at least a few points that I raised that will be considered for potential changes and editing - which I hope will occur after the close of this open public comment period. I expect that this was the anticipated plan of action after you solicit comments from the community members that you represent. If you have any questions about anything that I have submitted, please feel free to contact me. My goal in offering my comments was to convey to you the things that are important to me and my family as we continue our lives here in Greene County. I do love Greene County and I truly would not want to live anywhere else at this point in my life. I am worried about the County though. I truly hope that my words have helped, or made a difference in some way. I understand that I am "late to the game" as far as participation in this process...but it has my attention now - thanks to my son, Will Behm! It is not surprising that it is the youth in Greene County that has held me accountable in doing my part to help preserve this special place for decades into the future.

Submitted by: Jennifer Behm, V.M.D, Waynesburg Animal Hospital

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I'm writing to express my concerns about the Draft Greene County Comprehensive Plan.

Objectives or goals need to be MEASURABLE. Eg. (1) Creation of 20 new jobs paying at least \$15 an hour. (2) Creation of 6 new apartments (non-subsidized) of solid, middle-class quality with a monthly rent of \$500-650 per month.

This is very important. What you have in the plan now is too vague.

We need more non-subsidized housing housing if we want to retain/recruit young people. Too many of the rentals around here are either subsidized for the very poor (which IS needed & good) or substandard apartments owned by slum lords. We need housing/rental for working people.

Submitted by: Lisa Lewis, Washington, PA

I have a few suggestions for the education and work section of the 10 year plan:

A good measure of success would be the number of new jobs created in Greene County with a liveable hourly pay rate of at least \$15. Even better if those jobs are clean and green for the economy such as those involving solar/wind energy production or organic/sustainable farming. I would strongly encourage you to add this to the plan

Also important to add to the plan is decent, well kept, affordable non-government funded apartments to rent. Greene county needs to end the many year reign of slum lords and provide decent rental housing for the working middle class. We already have a lot of subsidized housing for the disabled and elderly poor, but a real shortage of the housing I am referring to.

Also important to add is a way to aid people in recovery back into the workforce. I have heard that companies have passed Greene over due to the difficulty filling jobs with people who can pass a urine test. The newly clean addict needs support to reenter the workforce and become successful. I realize this is complicated.

Submitted by: Lisa Lewis

Overall:

I am a resident of Franklin Township, and I have finished reading the draft of the Greene County 2019 Comprehensive Plan and Appendices. I am glad to see the County is continuing to look towards the future and I believe this Plan adequately summarizes our current situation and future aspirations. Unfortunately, I have several concerns regarding the integrity of the Comprehensive Plan and the potential negative image of Greene County it promotes. Most notably, I was shocked to see that extensive portions of the *Future Development and Investment* section were plagiarized from multiple sources. An article from EnergyHQ is cited as a source in this section, but the first paragraph of "Upstream Land Use Impacts", "Midstream Land Use Impacts", and half of the first paragraph of "Downstream Land Use Impacts" are copied word-for-word from this article without any indication of being a quote from EnergyHQ. Additionally, the remaining sentence in "Downstream Land Use Impacts" was copied directly from the last paragraph of an Investopedia article entitled, "Upstream Vs. Downstream Oil & Gas Operations: What's the Difference?" which was never cited in the Plan. If I

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plagiarized this much material as a college student, I would certainly fail that course and face strong academic sanctions, if not expulsion. It is unacceptable for the County to engage in such dishonest behavior and I hope to see this situation remedied in the final plan.

The Appendices are also in need of some formatting adjustments and the inclusion of critical data. The *Summary of Public Outreach* paints a misleading picture of the extent of community involvement. By stating that “a total of 2,742 votes were collected” many readers will believe this means 2,742 people placed one vote each. I would like to see the number of total participants included in this figure so that it reads, “... a total of 2,742 votes were collected from _____ community members” or have the total number of participants included the *Summary of Votes* section of the Appendices. Including this number will help critical readers accurately understand the extent to which the public participated in this process, and a similar analysis was included in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan (Section 1-C: Public Involvement).

Grammar:

Pg. 13 – Under *Surveys & Interviews*, the use of a semicolon is inappropriate because the phrase after the semicolon is not an independent clause. Changing to “the second **was** near the end...” would be grammatically correct.

Pg. 15 – First sentence of the first paragraph may read better if rewritten as “The Advisory Committee developed a Vision Statement and six Pillars that serve as the foundation of not only the plan, **but also** the planning process.” As currently written, I wonder how the Pillars can serve as the foundation of the planning process if it is based on feedback received throughout the planning process.

Pg. 15 – “Not only” and “but also” are a pair of correlative conjunctions and it is good grammatical practice to use them together (i.e. don’t use “not only” without “but also”).

Pg. 15 – The capitalization is inconsistent in “and identified issues, Goals and Strategies”. Later in the paragraph “goals” and “strategies” are both capitalized and not capitalized.

Pg. 16 – The use of a semicolon would be appropriate in “...focuses on the development of better infrastructure including water, sewer, and broadband; mobility and highway/road improvements” or even better reworded as “...focuses on mobility, transportation, and infrastructure such as water, sewer, and broadband” since this would be in the same order as the heading.

Pg. 16 – Perhaps reword from “have access to one broadband provider, at most...” to “have access to at most one broadband provider” (*Last Sentence of “Expanding access to broadband and cellular coverage”*)

Pg. 16 – There needs to be an apostrophe in “Department’s specifications” under *Updating and maintaining an adequate transportation network*.

Pg. 18 – The word “its” is possessive without the apostrophe. Using an apostrophe here is grammatically incorrect. (Under *Capitalizing on Energy Production*)

Pg. 19 – Insert “for” in “The Greene County Housing Plan Identifies a need **for** the following types...” in the last sentence of *Expanding housing opportunities*.”

Pg. 21 – The 2nd “Pillar” is not capitalized under *Snapshot* (when “Pillar” is capitalized everywhere else in the Plan)

Pg. 21 – The use of a semicolon under *Snapshot* is inappropriate because the second phrase is not an independent clause.

Pg. 22 – The third and fourth bullet points use double quotes and single quotes respectively, when double quotes are appropriate for both.

Pg. 24 – The use of semicolons in the first paragraph is incorrect because there are no commas in any list item and individual list items are not independent clauses.

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Pg. 24 – The last sentence is much clearer written in the following manner:

“Partnerships with the business community, Greene County Career and Technology Center, school districts, and state agencies such as **The** Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and **Department** of Labor and Industry are paramount.”

As currently written, this a sentence makes it sound like there is a single Department of Community, Economic Development, Labor, and Industry.

Pg. 39 – Abbreviations for titles like Rep. and Sen. are followed by a period

Pg. 42 – The last sentence needs to be capitalized (“in 2019...”)

Overall: Throughout the document, the authors chose to omit the last comma in a list. While this is technically grammatically correct, there are cases where a final comma would greatly improve clarity (Pg. 15, 24, and more)

Formatting:

Acknowledgements – Line up text in bottom right-hand corner.

Pg. 5 – Inconsistent Spacing between “Priority Goals”, “Future Development & Investment”, “Measures of Success”, and “Implementation”

Pg. 7 – Move the image down so that “regulations and” is readable.

Pg. 8 – Add space between “Progress” heading and first paragraph.

Pg. 13 – The “Greene Bucks” and “Postcards” images are significantly worse quality than other images that appear in the document.

Pg. 15 – The green pillar icons are not centered with the names of the pillars.

Pg. 15 – The grey text, “Planning Context //” is barely legible and could be recolored or omitted.

Pg. 15 – There is an extra space in “identified issues , Goals and Strategies” (*Second Paragraph*).

Pg. 16 – The heading is not in line with the Pillar icon.

Pg. 21 – One percentage is written as 6% while the other is written as 8.%. Both should either be written as 6% and 8% or 6.0% and 8.3% (“*Fighting neighborhood blight.*”)

Pg. 27 – It appears that the points under Strategy 1 are a larger font size than the points under Strategies 2 and 3.

Pgs. 39 – 43: The spacing between lines under *Benchmarks* is inconsistent.

Pg. 40 – The Greene County Career and Technology Center is abbreviated to CTC here when it was abbreviated as GCCTC earlier in the plan (Pgs. 12, 17). There should be one consistent abbreviation.

Overall: When “/” is used, sometimes there is a space before and after (Pgs. 36, 44, 45 and more) and other times there are no spaces. There should only be space after “/” when used to indicate a line break in poetry.

Overall: There are inconsistencies in how sources are presented. Sometimes the sources are included as a footnote (Pgs. 10 & 26) and other times they are presented in the text (Pgs. 16, 17).

Overall: There are inconsistencies in whether single quotes or double quotes are used throughout the document (Pg. 22). There should be one consistent method.

Content:

Pg. 13 – I believe the wording “Between all of these efforts, a total of 2,742 votes were collected” is misleading and implies that 2,742 community members were involved in the public outreach initiative. Including the approximate number of community members who provided input would more accurately reflect the extent of community involvement. This data could also be included in the appendices.

Pg. 16 – Perhaps reword “regularly identify an increasing pattern” as “regularly cite a positive correlation” unless these economic reports are finding that this pattern is getting stronger.

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Pg. 25 – Perhaps it makes more sense to phrase Strategy 1 of the Education goal as “Explore options to partner **County-wide**” since the subpoints require cooperation from multiple districts.

Pg. 28 – Perhaps change “crisis” to the plural form “crises” because volunteer firefighters and first responders respond to more than a singular crisis.

Pg. 30 – As a critical reader, I am confused how offering high quality housing choices will capture the nearly 8,000 workers Greene County that are commuting. Pg. 19 (Quality of Life Pillar) states 62% of workers commute into Greene County and only 5% would trade their commute if adequate housing choice was available. Attracting 8,000 commuters would only make sense if Greene County had a 160,000 people commuting into the County for employment. Either the 8,000 commuters' figure on Pg. 30 is inaccurate or the 5% figure on Pg. 19 is inaccurate.

Overall: Fix the Plagiarism in *Future Development & Investment* and include EnergyHQ in the Photo Credits. Even though the image on Pg. 33 is not a photograph, it is still a graphic that someone at EnergyHQ had to create and needs to be cited. The material that was copied could be written as a block quote clearly stating it came from EnergyHQ and Investopedia. Otherwise, it needs to be rewritten or omitted.

Submitted by: Myles Cramer

The Center for Coalfield Justice (“CCJ”) respectfully submits the following comment on the Draft Greene County Comprehensive Plan (“Draft Plan”). The Comprehensive Plan will serve as the policy guide for decisions about growth, future development and redevelopment, services and resource management in Greene County. Ultimately, all of these decisions and many others translate into the built environment that Greene County residents experience every day.

CCJ is a Pennsylvania---incorporated not---for---profit organization with federal Internal Revenue Service § 501(c)(3) status recognition located in Washington, PA. CCJ is a membership organization with a mission to “improve policy and regulation for the oversight of fossil fuel extraction and use; to educate, empower and organize coalfield citizens; and to protect public and environmental health.” CCJ has over two thousand members and supporters and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Many of our members and supporters are Greene County residents. The following comment reflects the input we received from those members and supporters.

A good comprehensive plan that has earned the support of the community is one of the most effective tools planners have in effecting positive change in our communities. Great places to live, work and recreate are not created by accident. Communities make choices every day about what type of places they will become. These choices are incremental. The comprehensive plan provides guidance to ensure that those incremental choices create the final result that the community desires. The comprehensive plan is a roadmap to residents’ desired destination and it is imperative that the Planning Commission gets this right.

We appreciate the steps that the County Planning Commission has taken to develop Draft Comprehensive Plan and to solicit public input. However, the Draft Plan falls short of ensuring that public natural resources, community health and the County’s economic well being are adequately protected.

I. Economic Development

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The Draft Plan appears to recognize that the County must respond to economic disruption and dislocation. The shift in the County's economy away from the coal industry has been painful to many households and communities. Workers have lost jobs, families have lost incomes, local government and school districts have lost revenue and curtailed services, and communities have lost their sense of stability. It is important to realize, however, that proposals to reverse that transition or to simply shift from one fossil fuel to another with little regard for the overall environmental and economic impacts offer little meaningful relief to those who are enduring much of the cost of the transition and, in the end, they are likely to do more harm than good. The quality of the Greene County's natural environment has tremendous economic value. Policies and actions that significantly diminish the natural environment may threaten the County's economic future and should be undertaken only after careful deliberation shows that they are worthwhile.

The Draft Plan outlines an economic development strategy that over-emphasizes natural gas extraction and use. While natural gas development has a role to play in new local economy, Greene County should resist the temptation to treat the natural gas and petrochemical industries as the solution to the decline of coal. Wise uses of natural resources means that the resources are used in the manner that has the highest, sustained value. It does not mean giving preference to one industry or group so that the resources go to a low-value use rather than to one that has a higher value. Giving preference to low-value uses will result in fewer jobs and lower incomes in the County. The natural gas and petrochemical industries create many temporary jobs and far fewer permanent jobs. The impact on the County's natural environment, however, is both significant and lasting.

Low-value uses do not make Greene County an attractive place to live, work and recreate. The Draft Plan recognizes that Greene County has experienced a decline in the overall population and an increase in the median age. See Draft Plan at 17, 20. The Draft Plan also acknowledges that the majority of people working in Greene County do not live in Greene County. Currently 62 out of every 100 workers in the County commute from outside the County. The Draft Plan suggests that inadequate housing choice is to blame. However, even if adequate housing choice were available, only 5 out of every 100 of these workers would trade their commutes and move into Greene County. See Draft Plan at 19. Giving preference to low-value land uses would further exacerbate these disturbing trends.

Because people care where they live and because businesses care where people choose to live, environmental quality has a positive impact on the local economy. Put negatively, degraded environments are associated with lower incomes and depressed economic conditions. Greene County does not have to choose between jobs and the environment. Quite the opposite: a healthy environment is a stimulus for a healthy, diverse economy.

Greene County should focus on navigating from being dependent on a few extractive industries to having a modern, widely diversified economy that provides a quality of life that many people find attractive. The economic fate of Greene County does not need to rest solely, or even predominately, on the coal and natural gas industries. Greene County can overcome the decline in coal extraction and realize job and income growth by making the County a place where people want to live, work and raise family. As the County attracts new workers and households, it also attracts new investment that creates jobs and incomes. As long as the county is able to provide a quality of life that many people find attractive, it will continue to prosper. As quality of life becomes more important to the County's economy, the economy will become less dependent on natural resource extraction and we will start to see a shift in the economic role that natural resources play. Our natural landscapes do not need to

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generate new jobs and incomes primarily by being warehouses from which we extract commercial products (e.g. coal and gas) that are exported out of the County. These natural landscapes can generate more new jobs and income by providing natural---resource amenities – water and air quality, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and the fish and wildlife – that make Greene County an attractive place to live, work and do business. People will move to this region and remain here because they want to enjoy its high---quality living environment. That growth in population will stimulate the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing ones.

a. Example of Potential High---Value Land Use: When deciding the future of Greene County, it is important for the County Planning Commissioners to look at any reasonable suggestion and factors that would allow smart growth within the community. Factors such as, but not limited to, land use, sustainable jobs that will bring growth to the community, community buy---in, and growth opportunities.

A recycling facility would increase land value that is currently considered blighted or even labeled as a brownfield. A recycling facility could be built on an existing brownfield site, land that has been deemed unfit for almost any purpose. Building a recycling facility in Greene County does two things for the community: (1) it puts to use land that was once deemed to be unusable, and (2) could potentially open the door for grant funding by redeveloping land that has been severely degraded by industrial operations. Redeveloping severely degraded land by building recycling facility would increase the land value and put to use land that few would consider for development. Moreover, the County may be able to receive funding to help develop the facility.

A recycling facility would introduce sustainable jobs. In the last five years Pennsylvania collected over 1.9 million tons of recycling.² This number is continuing getting bigger as people continue to consume recyclables and as the breadth of recycling grows to new residence in the state.ⁱ Also, once the facility has been approved, contracts could be made to bring in product from neighboring counties and states to ensure continued growth. Additionally, the introduction of a recycling facility to Greene County would bring the need to fulfill hundreds of permanent jobs. Everything from high skill engineers and management jobs to blue---collar labor positions. It would also bring a downstream of economic growth. Thus, a recycling facility would create and sustain full---time jobs that require a multitude of skilled labor and management positions.

The proposal of a recycling facility would help build community buy in and excitement among Greene county residents. Many programs could be developed to engage younger residence of the community to show how their actions are affecting the local community and the world at large. Programs could be introduced to elementary students all the way to secondary schools. Also, the idea of a facility could bring in younger families to the community. A recycling facility does not have the stigma or the environmental impact that other facilities (e.g. a cracker plant) may have. It provides the image of a community who cares about being good stewards and protecting the natural resources that make Greene County attractive. This stands in stark contrast to a facility that degrades the local environmental and negatively impacts public health. Lastly, a recycling facility could generate funds for Greene County. Greene County could instill a pricing program that would allow for the County to operate a facility while making a profit that could be reinvested into either other community projects or into the facility itself to expand into broader and bigger concepts that would bring more sustainable jobs into the County (e.g. processing glass into cullet that can be sold to buyers all over the world or large---scale composting that

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could then be sold to local farmers). Investing in a project such as a recycling facility does not have to be a limiting investment. Instead, it could continue to grow to meet either community or market demands.

By considering the factors of land use, sustainable jobs and growth to the community, community buy in and growth opportunities, the Greene County Planning Commissioners will ensure that they fulfill their duty of “promoting safety and security of its community by following smart growth practices.”

Although we believe that the points we make above represent sound economic analysis and judgment, nonetheless some of the points may be perceived as controversial or even partisan. Thus, it is important that those points not be misinterpreted.

CCJ is not arguing that the fossil fuel industries (coal and natural gas) are not important to the local economy. The fossil fuel industries are important in Greene County and will remain so in the foreseeable future. The point we have tried to make is not that they are unimportant but that increased volumes of material extracted are not likely to be sources of expanding employment and income. This is an important distinction.

The Draft Plan represents a long-term vision for Greene County. We urge the Planning Commission to recognize that additional, sustainable jobs and income can and should be generated in new value-added natural resource activities outside of the fossil fuel industries. It is for that reason that environmental degradation in pursuit of jobs and incomes in the coal and natural gas industries must be weighed against the damage that the degradation will do to the amenity-driven part of economic development, which has the potential to add considerable vitality to the local economy. This economic vitality will be tied to the attractive features of the County’s workforce, public institutions and the social and natural environments. If the County can protect what is unique and attractive about itself (e.g. natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities), it will continue to prosper. Serious damage to the County’s livability, however, will endanger this vitality and prosperity. Environmental degradation has impoverished other regions; it can impoverish this one too.

The primary route to the type of environmental degradation that could jeopardize the County’s economic prosperity is to allocate resources to low-value, degrading uses when protecting and enhancing them has a higher value. There are countless examples throughout the County of such detrimental events, such as when water resources are eliminated and/or polluted as a result of low-value coal refuse disposal operations despite the fact that those water resources have a higher value in protecting local water quality and quantity, angling and other recreational opportunities, and property values in the area; or when decisions about whether and where to locate natural gas operations fail to consider the costs imposed on valuable nearby lands.

The Planning Commission must guard against these threats if the County is to realize sustained prosperity. The County must avoid squandering the high-quality characteristics of the environment to insulate the region’s historically important industries from the realities of today’s economy. The unique natural resources of Greene County remain among its most important economic assets. The new jobs and income that are vital to the County’s economic future will depend more on the protection of those assets rather than on their degradation.

II. Education

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The County must make efficient, effective investments in education. The Draft Plan correctly identifies the need to address declining enrollment in the five public school districts due general regional population decline and an increase in residents choosing cyber charter or private schools. Surprisingly, the Draft Plan suggests limiting cyber students' ability to participation in extracurricular activities as a strategy to address this issue. See Draft Plan at 25 ("Develop incentives to keep the kinds in brick and mortar schools (i.e. limit cyber student's participation in graduation ceremonies, proms, sports and clubs).") This is the wrong incentive. The County should instead identify why residents are choosing cyber school over attending brick and mortar schools and then seek to address those issues. By addressing those issues, the County will achieve its objective of incentivizing students to attend brick and mortar schools without punishing our younger generation.

III. Recreation/Quality of Life

The Draft Plan proclaims: "Creating healthier communities is at the forefront of planning in 2019." Draft Plan at 28. The Planning Commission correctly recognizes the need to provide more and/or improved access to public recreation in the County. *Id.* As discussed above, environmental quality and outdoor recreation has a positive impact on the local economy because people care where they live and businesses care where people choose to live. Protecting Greene County's natural resources and the public's ability to enjoy those natural resources through outdoor recreational opportunities is essential to sustainable economic development. Outdoor recreational opportunities provide a quality of life that many people find attractive. By making Greene County a place where people want to live, work and raise a family, the County will be able to attract new workers and households and new investment that will create jobs and income.

Unfortunately, the goals and strategies to improve and expand recreational opportunities demonstrate a lack of vision at best and are insincere at worst. The goals and strategies outlined in the Draft Plan are achievable in far less than 10 years and do very little to actually improve and expand recreational opportunities within the County. By way of example, "[a]pply for funding to update the Wisecarver Recreation Master Plan" is simply the first step towards actually expanding recreational opportunities on the Wisecarver Property. The next step would be to actually update the plan. Finally, the County must implement the plan in order to actually achieve its stated goal of improving and/or expanding recreational opportunities. Particularly in a comprehensive plan that is intended to set forth a 10---year vision, the Planning Commission's apparent unwillingness to do more than apply for funding to update the Wisecarver Recreation Master Plan is disappointing.

IV. Strategies and Measures of Success

The Draft Plan should set forth meaningful strategies and markers for success for each of the pillars. Although the Draft Plan contains various strategies and benchmarks for success, the strategies for one pillar sometimes undermine the goals in another pillar. For example, taking away the ability for some students to participate in after school activities would likely be counterproductive to the County's efforts to address the opioid crisis. By way of further example, quality of life and the County's ability to attract young families may suffer as a result of the County's proposed economic development plan, which over---emphasizes natural gas extraction and use without considering the environmental and economic consequences of such development. The Planning Commission must be more thoughtful in developing strategies and measures of success for each of the pillars. These serve as the road map to get us to our desired destination – one cannot undermine the other.

V. Conclusion

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The Draft Comprehensive Plan should be significantly revised. In order to ensure that the final Comprehensive Plan reflects the community's vision, CCJ urges the Greene County Planning Commission to revise the Draft Plan based on this comment and the other public input it receives. Specifically, CCJ urges the Planning Commission to review the Draft Plan to (1) incorporate a sound and sustainable economic development plan that balances low---value and high---value land uses and makes Greene County an attractive plan to live, work and recreate; (2) include appropriate incentives to keep students in brick and mortar schools, which requires identifying why residents are choosing cyber school over brick and mortar schools and developing meaningful strategies to address those issues/concerns; (3) include new and additional strategies to improve quality of life in Greene County by enhancing existing outdoor recreational opportunities and creating new ones; (4) incorporate thoughtful strategies and measures of success for each of the pillars so that the strategies for one pillar to not undermine the goals of another. Due to the scope of the necessary revisions, the Planning Commission should make available for a second public comment period the next version of the Draft Plan.

Submitted by: Sarah E Winner, Esq. and Ethan Story, J.D, Center for Coalfield Justice

The plan in general:

First, I am disappointed with the overall presentation of this plan. It is entirely too vague. Unlike ten-year plans from previous decades, which often weighed in at more than 400 pages, this is a mere 46 pages, devoid of specific details, and represents more of a series of broad bullet-point objectives. Considering that this document is more than a year late, most of us had hoped for a more careful and well-thought out plan. Moreover, it is rife with grammatical errors.

Page 15- You note actions based on feedback received during the planning process, but then say it served as a foundation for said planning process. How can the foundation of the planning process be based on that very planning process? Clarify. This seems circular.

Numerous terms (Pillars, Goals, Strategies, etc.) are capitalized in some places, but not in others. Why?

Why is there not a direct link to the appendices? Or better yet, add that content into the document.

Page 16- Here, and throughout, the authors make reference to "reports" and "studies," but never offer a citation or reference. I would be very interested in knowing where this information came from. The authors should correct "deficient bridges have been plaguing..." to "deficient bridges have plagued..."

With respect to public drinking and wastewater treatment facilities mentioned on page 16, I would encourage the authors to examine the quarterly reports for facilities in our county. Their performance is dismal, and many are routinely in violation for various parameters (trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, bromides, etc.). For example, Southwestern PA Water Authority had 17 consecutive quarters between 2011 and 2015 in which it was over the suggested health guideline for bromodichloromethane (known carcinogen that has been linked to various complications during pregnancy).¹ During 2015, concentrations of this toxin in SWPAWA water were nearly 36 times higher than the suggested health guideline, and nearly four time higher than the state average. Brave Water Authority and East Dunkard

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Water Authority are significantly worse. In the last five years Brave has had 175 violations, while East Dunkard has had 196, and many of these are serious failures to provide safe drinking water to customers (e.g. situations in which MCLs were exceeded). Worse, most of these utilities then take additional violations for “Failure to Issue Tier 3 Public Notifications,” meaning the public is not notified of the presence of these contaminants in their drinking water. These concerns must be added to the proposed plan.

Page 17- Should read “work performance, and providing...”

Again, here we have a vague reference to an unnamed “publication” on supply, demand and future of work. What publication? Should be “identified several key issues”

“curriculum” should be the plural “curricula”

“highest demand occupations” is misleading. It literally reads like those are demanding jobs, not that they are jobs in demand. Clarify.

Are cosmetology programs really a problem in our county?

While there are many more typos or errors in grammar (read page 21 carefully), I’ll just focus on my major concern with what is being proposed. Priority 3 has just one major named industry. Outside of expansion of unconventional oil & gas production, no specific additional avenues for development are even mentioned (cracker plants are just an endpoint for this industry). In fact, the plan really reads like a neon sign to attract more fracking, but not much else. This is an industry I once supported, but now, after years of direct contact, am leery of. I discuss the threats to public health below, but this is also simply bad business planning. It’s no plan at all. I attended the EQT town hall meeting in Waynesburg back in August, and heard Toby Rice speak on the future of fracking in Greene County. To his credit, he was very blunt. The average production from a well drops below 10% of original output in less than three years. Landowners receive a massive royalty check that declines precipitously within about five quarters of production.

This of course, is something the citizen should consider. The money shows up like vapor, but the alteration to property (and property value) will outlive them. But, as a county, the same thing is a surety. Once every square inch of Greene County is fracked, then what? The authors complain of the lost tax revenue from a declining coal industry, but fail to see the same problem on the horizon of the fracking industry. And, just as our technicolor (and greatly impaired) powder blue, neon green and pumpkin orange waters bear the scars of a coal industry long gone, the legacy of fracking in this county will live on as a blight on our rural landscapes for decades. As casings fail and pipelines fall into disrepair, there will be no companies left to pay for the damages. We’re already seeing a myriad of examples of how the installation and transport aspects of this industry negatively impact our “rural-ability” and quality of life.² In 150 years, counties like Greene have failed to learn from their business mistakes, seeking fast cash over long-term stability.

Moreover, Toby Rice was also clear that the price of natural gas has bottomed out globally. This was the topic of a *Wall Street Journal* article just two weeks ago.³ Mr. Rice’s play is much like that of the agricultural sector in the middle of the 20th century. Overproduction had led to toppling commodities prices, and the industry’s solution was to keep flooding the market with more of a product that had

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saturated already. The main difference is that the federal government got involved and offered price fixing and numerous subsidies to farmers. The same is not true for unconventional gas & oil. This is an industry that is massively volatile and destined for immense boom and bust cycles. Even those inside the industry are questioning if it's viable.^{4,5,6}

Finally, there are the health impacts I previously mentioned. Priority 4 is related to health, safety and wellness. The authors note that Greene County ranked 63rd among the 67 counties in PA for this item, and that, among other things, air quality is a concern. Yet, here in their strategies for the next decade, they don't even mention public health, outside of more exercise and access to emergency medical assistance. The authors seem to be ignoring the conflict between Priority 3 and 4. I'm shocked that the authors don't even mention any of the health concerns unconventional oil & gas present to the public. For the sake of informing the Board of Commissioners, I will offer a few examples:

While the data for 2018 have not been made public, in 2017, this industry self-reported emitting 430 tons of Volatile Organic Compounds into Greene County's air. Among the various toxins emitted, this includes benzenes, formaldehyde, toluene and xylene; all known carcinogens. Pollutants also include Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5). These particles are small enough to move through the lungs and into the blood stream. I have a device that measures this. If I stand in my kitchen in Rogersville, it registers 6-8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Anything under 12 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ is considered good. I can take just a dozen steps out into my back yard and register anything from 20-43 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, depending on wind and the humidity. If it stays above 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for 24 hrs, we are in violation of EPA limits. My children are exposed to these toxins every time they play outside or stand at the bus stop.

A study by Steinzor and colleagues (2013) found that 74% of citizens living less than 500 ft from a fracking well pad experienced acute exposure symptoms. Even at 1,500-4,000 ft away, 27% of people experienced these symptoms. Gorski and Schwartz (2019) performed a meta-analysis of the existing published studies and found "associations between proximity to unconventional natural gas development and pregnancy and birth outcomes; migraine headache, chronic rhinosinusitis, severe fatigue, and other symptoms; asthma exacerbations; and psychological and stress-related concerns." They also found evidence that "women living closer to fracking have increased odds of having a baby with lower-than-average birth weight; of having a high-risk pregnancy; or having a baby with a low infant health index." Elliott and colleagues (2017) found that, while toxicity information doesn't even exist for most of the chemicals associated with hydraulic fracturing, 28 of the air and water pollutants are associated with childhood leukemia.

This is an industry that has been sloppy and careless at times, and Greene County needs to demand better from it. While the conventional gas wells average just one environmental violation per eight wells, unconventional oil and gas in PA has managed more violations than wells! Just over the hill from where I (I can see the well pad from my front porch), the well operator has been hit with multiple violations including discharging industrial waste into the waters of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We need assurances that debacles like the one unfolding in Belle Vernon won't happen on our side of the Monongahela.⁷ There, the unpleasant reality that "residual waste" (like that being trucked around our roads every day) is radioactive has come to light in a big way, as untreatable fracking landfill waste is being discharged one mile upstream from Charleroi's drinking water intake.

We are producing thousands of millions of gallons of toxic waste that either stays underground (we hope), or ends up in our surface and ground water. The DEP has already released redacted files on 344

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cases (and counting) of groundwater contamination from fracking activity.⁸ In fact, the PA DEP received 9,442 complaints related to fracking activity between 2004 and 2016.⁹

Expansion of the industry (and especially compressor stations) would only grow the exposure risks for all of us.

In 2016, the Pennsylvania Medical Society (a society comprised of more than 16,000 medical professionals working to protect and maintain our health) requested a ban on fracking.¹⁰ Yet, the authors here don't even mention these concerns at all.

The Board of Commissioners needs to take seriously the idea that we are playing Russian roulette with our childrens' wellbeing. At the very minimum, establish a serious committee, tasked with considering these concerns.

Submitted by: Wayne Rossiter

My name is Will Behm. I am a second-year student at Middlebury College, but I spent my childhood and still hold permanent residence in Franklin Township just south of Waynesburg. My father has been a Greene County Resident for his whole life, and my mother owns a small business that depends on the well being of the county and its residents. As of now, I plan to move out of Greene County permanently when I finish my higher education. While I love my home and think that it is one of the most beautiful places I know, I simply do not believe that its future currently holds a sustainable job where I can pursue my interests and raise a family in a healthy environment. I see this update of the comprehensive plan as a window of opportunity to drive Greene County in a better direction, and I am extremely concerned that it is not doing so. My primary concern, as a student in Environmental Studies, is our environment. It is at the heart and soul of Greene County. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it is our number one asset. The industries on which this county was founded depended upon the environment. All agriculture relies on the environment. Many choose to live here because of the environment. Public health relies on the environment. Currently, the biggest threat to our environment is our engagement with the energy industry, specifically natural gas. This, as I understand it, is currently the central aspect of the Comprehensive Plan. After growing up during the rise of fracking and eventually coming to learn some of its specifics, I do not think it is wise for the county to continue to rely on it. Before I dive into some specifics of the Comprehensive Plan, however, I think it best that I share some information that is seemingly forgotten or ignored.

First, the EPA does not regulate the injection of fracturing fluids under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This is more commonly known as "The Halliburton Loophole". On a federal level, the chemical additives that are pumped into the ground do not have to be disclosed (Save for the use of diesel). As of March 2017, the Pennsylvania DEP required operators to report the types, volumes, and chemical additives of their fluids. *However*, companies were exempted from this reporting if a chemical or its concentration is considered a "trade secret". Thus, it is NOT outside the realm of possibility that harmful chemicals/concentrations of chemicals are being used in the fracturing process. The use and disposal of these chemicals is therefore hazardous to our water quality given the process, and must not be handled lightly. As I understand it, however, the vast majority of such information in the natural gas industry is self reported. It seems that there is no significant or consistent oversight of the process on the part of the DEP. This means that corners can be cut to minimize costs, and no one would be the wiser if these

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violations escape undetected. This lack of transparency therefore also applies (Though under different laws) to air quality, as any gases that escape during the process will not be documented. One of these many gases is methane, which will likely be escaping more and more given the current loosening of federal regulations. Methane has a GWP of 28-36 over 100 years *according to the EPA* . This means that for every molecule of methane that escapes to the atmosphere, 28-36 times the thermal energy is held in the atmosphere relative to one molecule of carbon dioxide. Our county may be contributing to the undeniable global threat of climate change, right under our noses. There are many other instances I could provide, but I stand by my point. Thus far, the natural gas industry has held the potential to (and likely has) done a great deal of environmental damage to Greene County. I understand that many have made their livelihoods off of this industry, and I do not wish that away. I do, however, feel that it is time we analyze the true costs of our actions and begin to strive for a sustainable future that works for everyone.

The first of my specific comments on the plan addresses the last paragraph of page 32, "Future Development and Investment.": "The overall goal for Greene County is to ensure that the rural character is restored to all areas of the County after the land is disturbed during exploration and production. The County strongly encourages its municipalities to adequately plan and regulate land use to minimize these disruptions to the surrounding areas (whether it be agriculture, commercial, residential, etc.) and ensure restoration through the enactment of ordinances that address zoning, noise, road bonding and buffers."

Quite frankly, this statement terrifies me, and I am astounded that it was included. It appears that the "overall goal" of the County is not to be implemented by the county, but rather allow the gas industry to ravage our environment, leave it as they please, and then depend upon the municipalities (some of which have not even been required to put together a comprehensive plan of their own in a timely fashion) to be responsible for the damage. This statement needs rewritten such that the county takes responsibility for the condition of its environment, and if we are going to *allow* companies the *opportunity* to use *our* resources, then *they* must be responsible for damages while being subject to *critical oversight on the part of the county in conjunction with individual municipalities as well as the state* . (light and noise ordinances, water/air quality testing and assurance, sediment and soil regulation, etc.) This, along with a strengthening of individual municipalities plans as well as their cooperation with the county, may help minimize the blatantly deleterious effects that we have allowed industry to foist upon us in the past.

My next issue is in the last paragraph of page 34, discussing downstream development. I must begin by acknowledging the inadequate citations in the body text of this section (not specifically the aforementioned paragraph), which plagiarize the webpage (EnergyHQ) from which they were taken. As a college student, it is a shame that I had to see this (along with any other plagiarism I may have missed) when I could be disciplined or even expelled from my institution for similar offenses. In any case, this is the paragraph I take issue with: "In order to support the development of the downstream sector of the natural gas industry, Greene County sees its role as identifying priority investment areas to encourage and incentivize the development of supporting infrastructure for manufacturing. Such investments may include the development of compressor stations, processing facilities, fractionators, broadband, intermodal rail and lock and dam system upgrades. These facilities cannot be built all over the County but rather, concentrated to areas that can support them, as shown on the Infrastructure Investment Areas Map on page 35. These areas are primarily located along the western/southwestern border with West Virginia, active rail line corridors and the eastern area along the Monongahela River."

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It is completely unclear in this section what the specific intentions for development are. I have only been able to make educated guesses as to what the plans for downstream development are in the county. It is my understanding that Greene County largely produces for the petrochemical/plastics industry with Natural Gas Liquids (NGL's), and that it would be gearing up for storage or other petrochemical buildout. To welcome this development to our county would be just as detrimental if not worse than the existing industry. The downstream buildout you wish to attract would increase truck traffic, wastewater (as I described its effects earlier), and fracking in general. Additionally, there would be other effects added if we were to welcome plastics production, including the same "cancer alley" that currently disproportionately affects those living in the midst of downstream buildout on the Gulf of Mexico. Greene County would also then be providing an *even larger* negative contribution to perhaps the largest environmental topic: plastics (specifically single use). The more I read this plan, the more it becomes clear to me that the main economic decision the county is trying to make is to attract as much of the natural gas supply chain that it can to the county. Any amount of legitimate research would show that this will ultimately cause great long-term harm to our environment and our economy, especially with non-renewable resources being the boom-and-bust industries that they are. I could not advise more strongly against the decisions that are evidently being made here on behalf of the county.

Despite my evident disapproval of many parts of this plan, I would like to highlight an area that stuck out to me. In the second paragraph of page 26, under Priority Goal Three, it reads: "We need to be not only working to capitalize upon the natural gas industry, but also looking to explore other areas that we can become a regional economic player." I do think this sentence needs reworded, but I wholeheartedly agree with its meaning. Even with the presence of the natural gas industry, we are ultimately a weak economy on behalf of our lack of diversity.

Even from solely an economic standpoint, it is ridiculous that the idea of renewable energy is not included in the plan. Specifically, I feel that Greene County could benefit from solar. It is no longer the unaffordable expense that it once was, and the lack of processing eliminates the need for external companies, thus keeping more money in the local economy. For large scale projects, panels have dropped to nearly \$0.50 per watt. For smaller scale homes and other projects, many companies are willing to finance purchase out of resulting electric bill deficits, lowering costs. If Greene County were to encourage solar production, it would ultimately allow greater savings for residents, as well as other larger scale savings. As a broad example, were solar to be utilized to power even a portion of our schools lighting or heating, we could be cutting costs and directing funds to promote better educational tools, thus attracting more families, and ultimately improving economy. Exploration and feasibility research into renewables would almost certainly allow us to become a more independent economy (especially given that some gas operations cut costs by employing solar!). Greene County also must not focus entirely on the energy industry. We may not have the capacity for massive agriculture operations, but we should most certainly be capitalizing on sustainable operations with good stewardship. Despite its presence, the agriculture sector could be invaluable to Greene County if we could fully utilize our local products.

My final comment applies to Priority Goal 4, on County Health, Safety, and Wellness. As I discussed before, I think that resources such as air and water are currently at high risk given the industries we are supporting. Additionally, as a community we should be in general agreement that access to clean air and water should never be in jeopardy. I propose that this section be revised to include county systems or committees whose primary concern is access to clean resources for all citizens (This could be expanded

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to include sewage, or other public health-related areas). Another area worth pursuit is sustainable farming practices, which when enforced can have a positive effect not only on public health and wellness, but the quality of agricultural products to be sold. On another note, I think a general definition of the term “natural resource” is required, as it is unclear in the plan. Those reading should be able to understand what counts as a natural resource. Are natural resources something that can be exploited, or are they the things that the public should have access to at all times? A concise definition of our natural resources may be very beneficial to the ways we discuss and decide to utilize our environment.

As I certainly believe is evident at this point, my disappointment with the 2019 Comprehensive Plan Draft cannot be understated. The residents, wildlife, and environment of Greene County deserve every ounce of effort that can be put into the plan, and for that reason I implore you to postpone its adoption until it is in a state that will do right by all. As I said, I have no plans of staying in Greene County for the rest of my life, but I think I should amend that statement. I have no plans of coming back to Greene County unless I feel that it is a sustainable, healthy place where I can raise a family in an economy that works for everyone.

Submitted by: William E. Behm

After reading the comprehensive plan presented i would like to comment: I found the objectives addressed very important and well worth following up on. A plan usually indicates some steps to achieving these goals. i found these quite lacking. Do you have any plans in step? You did not address job training, local jobs, union jobs and how we could improve the economy of the count by providing for avenues in these directions. you also didn't address the negative impacts of some of the areas you were pursuing. Are we not concerned with the possible adverse effect that might occur from the extraction of fossil fuels and how they will adversely effect the health and land values of our beautiful county? I would hope the commissioners would include these areas as part of the overall plan. Make it come off the paper in a prosperous and glowing fashion.

Submitted by: Attilia Shumaker, Sycamore, PA

I am writing you from my personal email desantisk@aol.com not from my Waynesburg University one, where I an a part time adjunct professor of Space Science and Meteorology. In my personal life I am an amateur astronomer, former Vice President of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh, and volunteer as a NASNJPL Solar System Ambassador in astronomy education outreach. A resident of Monongahela, Washington County I actively volunteer there and at the nearby Mingo Creek Park Observatory and see tourism as a shared asset in Western Pennsylvania.

In looking over the Draft 2019 Greene County Comprehensive Plan, tourism is strongly present, yet it was not apparent to me how astronomy tourism was represented, if represented at all? Yet Greene County possesses some of the finest if not the finest of all dark skies in Southwestern PA. Dark skies are an asset for both astronomy tourism and for quality of life.

Adoption of a quality comprehensive lighting code like the IDNIES Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) with minimum standards for permanent lighting installations may be found on the international Dark Sky

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Association website <http://www.darksky.org/outdoorlighting/mlo> . Such standard can help to maintain dark skies into the future.

Submitted by: Kathleen DeSantis
