



*An Independent Affiliate of PA CleanWays, Inc.

December 14, 2007

Michael Kurosky
Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
246 South Walnut Street
Blairsville, PA 15717

Dear Mr. Kurosky;

Please allow me to express Westmoreland Cleanways' heartfelt endorsement of the efforts of the Friends of the Mon to address the serious issues of pollution in the Ohio River Basin caused by years of illegal and inappropriate waste disposal and dumping in the watershed.

While the Monongahela River fed the region and added to our growth as industrial giants, years of dumping slowly choked the waters that fed us. Fortunately, because the problems are finally being addressed, or unfortunately, because it's taken so long, efforts to restore the basin to its environmental beauty and health are making a remarkable difference. While the decline of heavy industry that was a major source of pollution inadvertently also did much to clean up the river, the residual effects of both industrial and human activity left scars on the land that continue to leach toxins into the waterways.

Westmoreland Cleanways, founded in Westmoreland County in 1990 as PA CleanWays, addresses issues of non-point source water pollution caused by illegal and inappropriate waste disposal activities. Since 1990, volunteers of PA CleanWays/Westmoreland Cleanways have cleaned up over 1,500 tons of trash and 18,000 tires that, in many cases, were leaching toxins into nearby streams and groundwater, and ultimately affecting our major county waterways, the Youghiogheny, the Allegheny, and Kiskiminitas Rivers. We have no doubt that the same non-source points of pollution exist in the Mon River Basin, as well. The efforts of the Friends of the Mon can achieve the same results as that seen by PA CleanWays, not only in Westmoreland County but across the state, particularly in partnership with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and other watershed protection programs.

We understand that the Friends of the Mon group is working actively to engage the community in their mission in much the same way Westmoreland Cleanways/PA CleanWays organized in 1990. To accomplish this mission takes dedication, commitment, manpower, and funding beyond that which a group of volunteers working part-time would be able to achieve in a reasonable period of time. For that reason, we endorse the Friends of the Mon effort to fund a full-time staff person to create a dynamic voice for the cleanup of the Mon Valley River Basin.

We request that the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy approve the funding request by the Friends of the Mon to underwrite the cost of a VISTA staff member. The Conservancy's support will further its own mission while helping to expand opportunities for many organizations and communities in the Ohio River Basin.

Thank you for the opportunity endorse this worthwhile organization.

Sincerely,

Ellen C. Keefe

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Interim Executive Director



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