

Grassroots PA Dairy Advisory Committee
Bernard C. Morrissey, chairman
4 Austin Drive, Robesonia, PA 19551

The Honorable Joseph Scarnati
Senate President Pro Tempore
Senate Box 203025
292 Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

April 7, 2020

Act now to move House dairy bills before Senate Agriculture Committee

Dear Mr. President:

In the midst of a state dairy crisis, we have seen legislative failed attempts for the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board (PMMB) over-order premium transparency to assess how premiums make their way to the state's dairy farmers, for which they were intended, and impacts on attracting out of state milk and other loopholes.

While the House passed numerous bills, those bills came to the Senate to die as they were not brought forward by the Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee under the leadership of Chairman Elder Vogel Jr.

Now we are in a situation where two important bills – H.B. 1223 and 1224 – passed by the House virtually unanimously last year (December 2019). However, the Senate Ag Committee has not brought them forward. One of these bills (1223) would create Keystone Opportunity Zones specifically for new dairy processing. The other bill (1224) would give the PMMB the authority to work with the PA Dept. of Revenue to collect over-order premiums that are included in the minimum milk price -- paid by all PA consumers on every gallon of milk no matter where it comes from -- so that these funds can be directed to the PA dairy farms as per the intent of the law. The bill would give PMMB the authority to use its normal hearing process to develop a system to bypass loopholes regarding these premiums, especially where direct pass-through cannot be accounted for.

Now, there is an opportunity of a lifetime for you to save our dairy industry from complete failure. With the COVID-19 pandemic, displacement and dumping of local PA milk and a 35% milk income loss across our farms in one month and expected to continue for the next three, you have an opportunity to get these bills out of committee and onto the floor.

The Pennsylvania dairy industry is at risk to losing it all – given our small and numerous herd size – the heart of rural PA. Rural Pennsylvanians are counting on this industry to survive COVID-19. Now is your time to act.

We believe House Bills 1223 and 1224 provide ways to enable PMMB to direct these funds paid by PA consumers to support PA farms as the law intends. The current emergency shows how vital our state's dairy farms and infrastructure are to sustain the health of our farms, our economy and our citizens.

We ask you as President Pro Tempore of the Pennsylvania State Senate to bring new leadership to the Senate Agriculture Committee. Please respond to our request within the next seven days as the dairy crisis deepens.

Thank you for your consideration
Sincerely,



Bernard C. Morrissey, chairman

The Grassroots PA Dairy Advisory Committee hereunder signed

Tricia Adams, Genesee, Potter County

Sherry Bunting, East Earl, Lancaster County

Krista Byler, Spartansburg, Crawford County

Michael Eby, Gordonville, Lancaster County

Dale Hoffman, Shinglehouse, Potter County

Amanda Miller, Troy, Bradford County

Katie Sattazahn, Womelsdorf, Berks County

Karl Sensenig, New Holland, Lancaster County

Nelson Troutman, Richland, Berks County

Bonnie Wenger, Lebanon, Lebanon County

Cc: Chairman Elder Vogel Jr., all members of PA Senate Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee