

Mock Signing Event Recognizes Groups' Efforts For Nutrient Management

VERNON ACHENBACH JR.
Lancaster Farming Staff
MIDDLETOWN (Dauphin Co.) — A number of groups and individuals involved in the long negotiations which resulted in the state's recently enacted Nutrient Management Act were recognized Tuesday during a mock signing ceremony held at a dairy farm in Middletown.

Although Gov. Robert Casey actually signed the bill into law previously, he held the signing ceremony to honor those people and organizations which worked to create the nutrient management laws.

The event was held on the 160-acre dairy farm of Ron and Jay Kopp, whose father was one of the first to sign up as a cooperator with the conservation district when it first formed in the 1950s.

Though the Kopp farm is not a high-density agricultural operation, as defined under the nutrient management law, it was selected as the site for the mock signing ceremony because of the history of the farm and the Kopp's continued conservation and soil protection practices.

It was also selected as a site because of its proximity to Harrisburg, making access easy for Gov. Casey, several legislators involved with the final version of the act, and representatives of the state's major farm organizations and environmental organizations.

Prior to posing for photographs with representatives of each of the groups involved, Casey said, "His-

tory is going to show that progress has been made that is significant to all of this."

The passing of the law is not only seen as a significant step in helping Pennsylvania reach its goal of a 40 percent reduction in nutrient flow into the Chesapeake Bay via the Susquehanna watershed by 2000, but also to better ensure Pennsylvania citizens their constitutional right to clean water and a safe, healthy environment.

"This law — the first of its kind in the nation — brings Pennsylvania a step closer toward meeting the goals of the historic 1987 Chesapeake Bay agreement," Casey said during the Tuesday ceremony.

"It's also a law that has the widespread support of the agricultural and environmental communities because they had a voice in its development," he said.

"We knew that we had to devise a plan that balances the needs of agriculture — Pennsylvania's largest industry — and those of the environment and the Chesapeake Bay.

"Pennsylvanians have a shared interest and responsibility with Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia to ensure that this remarkable national treasure is not lost," Casey said.

Also speaking during the ceremony was bill sponsor Rep. Jeffrey Coy, D-Franklin, who also chaired Casey's appointed Select Committee on Nutrient Management.

Coy talked about the coopera-

tive effort to get the bill created. Though in a news release and during his talk, he repeated criticism of Republicans for not acting fast enough to pass nutrient management laws.

The criticism results from the fact that the Republican Party had control of the Senate until late last year, when the power balance slipped to the Democrats during the last week of the previous

Legislature.

During that time, Coy and others in the House had attempted to get an earlier version of the law quickly approved. However that bill, which contained mostly the same wording as the now-approved act, never made it to the Democratic Senate floor for a vote before the Legislature adjourned.

Winning reelection, Coy reintroduced the legislation almost

immediately in the new Legislature.

"I am extremely pleased that this legislation has finally seen its way to the governor for his signature," Coy said. "The Nutrient Management Act takes a responsible approach toward tackling the problem of nonpoint source nutrient pollution. And it does so in a way that makes sense for both agricul-

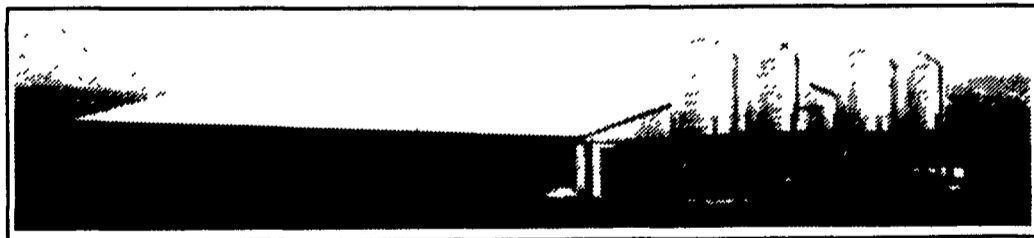
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Seated with pen in hand, Gov. Robert Casey poses in a reenactment of signing of the Nutrient Management Act with the Middletown Kopp dairy farm family, which has been involved in soil conservation practices since the Dauphin County Conservation District came into being. The Kopp's milk 110 registered Holsteins on a 160-acre free-tall operation and crop a total of 600 acres. From the left are Ron, his children Brandon and Rachelle, Mary and Howard Kopp (retired), and Ann, children Adam and Jayanna, and husband Jay Kopp. Ron and Jay are in partnership.

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