



October 10, 2017

Dr. Eric Barron, President
The Pennsylvania State University
201 Old Main
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Dr. Barron:

It is with cautious optimism that the Nittany Valley Water Coalition (NVWC) writes to you today. While the University has evicted us from Penn State owned farmland on Whitehall Road (pictured in panoramic view above), we applaud the University for returning the land to farming use for this coming winter planting season.

It is the use of this land and surrounding parcels that is of paramount importance to the NVWC and our community. We call upon the University to be a steward of this land and a partner with our community to maintain the quality of life and valuable resources unique to our valley.

This land, upstream of our precious drinking water supply, should be preserved using a permanent conservation easement focused on farming or other sustainable activities. We are sure you are aware of Clearwater Conservancy's recent success in raising \$2.75M to preserve 300 acres (Myer and Everhart farmland) as part of their Slab Cabin Run Initiative. That land is beside the proposed Toll Brothers development. PSU's Whitehall Road property, besides playing a role in water protection, is land of unusual aesthetic value, with sweeping views and almost no structures visible in the landscape. We place a high priority on this aesthetic feature, as should PSU, because as this region develops we risk losing our iconic Centre County landscapes treasured by residents and alumni. You may know that when Penn State was originally proposed (as the Farmers Field School) there were five locations on the table, spread across the state. Centre County won out because of its natural beauty, isolation and agricultural heritage. The preservation of the Whitehall Road site connects us to this past and prepares us for the future.

While farming represents a great sustainable practice for this land, the NVWC also envisions a mutually beneficial research-based "living lab" with a small, low-impact "green" building that complements the natural landscape and valley vista. One of us (David Hughes) suggested this back in June 2016 and has had discussions with Dr Gray and others about this. We, the NVWC, would be happy to assist with capital campaign fundraising to support this kind of effort.

Finally, we are committed to continue our opposition to the proposed sale of the 44 acres for the proposed Toll Brothers luxury student housing complex at this location. It is our hope that the University will continue to work with us and Toll Brothers to find a more suitable location for their housing project.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Nittany Valley Water Coalition,
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