



State Senator
Andy Dinniman

KEEPING IN TOUCH

SPRING 2018

***FORGING A STRONG FUTURE
for Chester County***



INSIDE:

**Fighting for Fair Districts • Pipeline Safety Bills • Transportation Projects
Reforming Harrisburg • Education Update • Protecting Our Pets**



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Dear Friend,

Together, we've built Chester County on common ground and common values. Values like . . .

- Ensuring fair elections as the foundation of democracy.
- Reforming government to cut wasteful spending and pass balanced budgets on time.
- Protecting our natural resources, land, and water rights.
- Putting the health, safety, and quality of life in our communities first.
- Building a modern transportation infrastructure that drives economic growth.
- Supporting strong schools that focus on teaching and learning.

Now, the question is: what are our government agencies in Harrisburg and Washington doing to support, promote, and embrace our Chester County values?

Unfortunately, not enough.

All too often, it seems like our government is putting itself and special interests before the people.

We see it when pipeline companies are permitted to steamroll through our neighborhoods with little to no safety precautions, emergency response plans, or environmental protections. We see it when lawmakers fail to pass a complete budget on time and then rely on \$1.5 billion in borrowing to support excessive spending. And we see it when our legislative districts are so blatantly gerrymandered our map looks like a piece of abstract art.

As both your state Senator and a fellow citizen, I cannot overlook the recent failures of government to address some of the most pressing and important issues of the day. And you shouldn't either.

Here, I'll discuss where our government is falling short and how we must unite to enact real change.

At the end of the day, it's important that we are fully informed and stand together to successfully demand action on the issues that matter most to us, to our families, and to Chester County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew E. Dinniman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

ANDREW E. DINNIMAN
State Senator – 19th District

On the cover: Senator Dinniman meets with students from Conestoga High School's New Voters Club on the floor of the Pennsylvania Senate. The club was recently honored for registering more than 85 percent of their eligible classmates to vote – the first school in the Commonwealth to meet this milestone. Pictured (from left to right) Bryce Bundens, Jahnavi Rao, Senator Dinniman, and Grace Lanouette.

◆ Pipeline Safety Update

Should an energy company be permitted to install a pipeline carrying highly combustible materials within a few dozen feet of homes, schools, playgrounds, or public libraries?

Should they be able to do so in a densely populated area without conducting an independent assessment of the risks and potential safety issues at stake?

Senator Dinniman doesn't think so. That is why he is calling for strong safety measures on pipeline routes and during pipeline construction.

Dinniman has been a vocal critic of Sunoco's Mariner East II pipeline project from the beginning – a project that has been plagued by problems including contaminated wells, drilling fluid spills, and an expanding sink-hole that threatens homes and is within 100 feet of Amtrak's Keystone Line.

Chester County may not be home to Marcellus Shale drilling, but it is being crisscrossed by one of the highest numbers of pipelines in the Commonwealth, some of which, like Mariner East II, are slated to carry highly volatile natural gas derivatives like liquid propane and butane. More and more of these pipelines are being planned every day.

"At the very least, we expect our state agencies to gather all necessary data, put in place a strong emergency response plan, thoroughly review geological research, and conduct an independent risk assessment," Dinniman said. "Unfortunately, time and time again we've learned that this is not the case."

After six months of Dinniman calling for action, including bringing dozens of impacted residents to Harrisburg and helping circulate a petition signed by thousands of citizens, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) ordered a temporary, partial suspension of pipeline construction.

However, the order only related to environmental concerns and it was lifted after Sunoco paid a hefty fine.

In response, Dinniman has brought together a grassroots group

of residents impacted by Mariner East II and members of local and regional citizens groups to obtain an independent risk assessment on their own.

"It's hard to believe that an independent risk and safety assessment was not required to begin with, but we're not about to sit on our hands and wait for our government to do its job. We're going to move forward. We're going to do it ourselves," Dinniman said.

In addition, he said that the repeated failures of DEP, the Public Utility Commission (PUC), and the governor's office to address very real pipeline safety concerns highlight the need for legislative changes in the process.

Dinniman, who serves on the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, has introduced several bipartisan bills to improve the safety of pipelines. They include:

■ **Senate Bill 928** requiring pipeline companies to apply for authorization on the placement of pipelines to be



Dinniman stands with Chester County residents, children, and families in delivering a petition and letters to the governor's office calling for a halt in the construction of the Mariner East II pipeline until a risk assessment is done.

constructed under safety and environmental standards. Right now, Pennsylvania is one of the only states that does not regulate the placement of intrastate pipelines.

■ **Senate Bill 574** allowing local municipalities and school districts to tax natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines as real estate, as is done in other states, including New Jersey, Ohio and West Virginia.

■ **Senate Bill 931** calling for remote shutoff valves on pipelines in high-consequence areas.

"Clearly, Pennsylvania's current process for permitting pipelines is at best, falling woefully short and at worst, completely broken. We need comprehensive pipeline reform and we need it now," Dinniman said.

◆ Protecting Our Pets

Senator Dinniman is a dogged fighter for tough animal cruelty laws in Pennsylvania while working to help keep pets out of animal shelters.

Dinniman has introduced **Senate Bill 480**, which calls for strengthening Pennsylvania's Animal Cruelty Law to increase the penalty when animal abuse happens in a domestic-violence situation. This often occurs when an estranged spouse or partner (who is under a protection from abuse order) will try to inflict emotional harm on an individual by hurting or killing their pet.

Dinniman has also partnered with the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Foundation and Meals on Wheels (MoW) of Chester County to launch Henry's Helping Paws Fund, which delivers free pet food with MoW meals to disabled or homebound senior citizens who lack the financial resources to care for their beloved animal companions.

"Our mission is keeping people and their pets together in their homes and both well fed," Dinniman said.

The program is named for Henry, the Dinniman family's late poodle who was well-known throughout the Chester County region.



Dinniman takes his rescue dog, Jagger, on a walk in downtown West Chester.

◆ Transportation Projects

Work is now underway on significant upgrades and revitalization projects related to several train stations throughout Chester County.

In **Coatesville**, construction continues to progress on the Third Avenue Streetscape Project, the first phase of revitalization work related to the new Coatesville Train Station. The project aims to transform Third Ave. as a gateway to the city from the new train station, and includes repaving and the installation of sidewalk improvements from Lincoln Highway to Fleetwood Street. The next phase calls for the realignment of Fleetwood St. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In **Downingtown**, the Hankin Group recently demolished the abandoned Sonoco Paper Mill to make way for Brandywine Station, a transit-oriented development located



Dinniman visits the site of work on the Third Avenue Streetscape project in Coatesville.

at the site of what is slated to be the new Downingtown Train Station.

The project will transform the entrance to Downingtown, with plans to build 442 residential units atop 14,200 square feet of retail space on 68 acres at the intersection of Boot Road and Route 322. In addition, the development will feature a pedestrian bridge connecting Downingtown's Johnsontown Park to the east bank of the Brandywine Creek and a trail system that links to the proposed extension of the Chester-Valley Trail.

In **Exton**, work is underway to significantly upgrade the Exton Train Station. Already the parking lot has

been expanded and reconfigured to accommodate nearly 70 additional vehicles. Currently, crews are working on constructing new, 500-foot-long raised platforms to make the train accessible for those with disabilities. Once the platform work is completed, work will begin on the construction of a heated station building on the inbound (eastbound) side with a ticket office, waiting area, and restrooms, and a new canopy and glass shelter on the outbound (westbound) side. The project is expected to be completed this fall.

In **Paoli**, the first phase of work continues on a project that will eventually replace the current train station building, which dates back to 1953, with a modern intermodal transportation center. Crews have already made significant progress on constructing a new high-level platform between the eastbound and westbound tracks, to make that train accessible to those with disabilities.

In addition, construction is in progress to expand parking to the north side of the tracks to improve the flow of traffic and add about 50 new parking spaces.

The first phase of the Paoli project also calls for elevators and ramps, a pedestrian overpass, and upgrades to the station's rail infrastructure. It is expected to be completed by mid-next year.

Dinniman has also worked with PennDOT to allocate \$3.5 million in funding for preliminary work related to the major improvements slated for



Dinniman (right) looks over plans for transit-oriented development in Downingtown with Mike Malloy (left), General Counsel for the Hankin Group.

the **Parkesburg Train Station**.

"These new train stations and related revitalization projects will not only drive economic growth in our region, but they'll also provide a safer commute for rail riders while helping relieve traffic congestion on some of our busiest roadways," Dinniman said.

Dinniman, who serves on the Senate Transportation Committee, is also spearheading the effort to accelerate work on two vital intersections in southern Chester County.

He worked with colleagues from across the aisle to secure crucial funding to improve and realign the **intersection of Route 796 and Old Baltimore Pike** at the site of the former Red Rose Inn in Penn Township. The project, which is now underway, aims to improve traffic flow and safety by adding additional turning lanes.

Dinniman has also secured \$600,000 in funding to reconstruct the **intersection of Baltimore Pike and Newark Road** in New Garden. Currently identified by planners as the top intersection for improvement in Chester County, its narrow layout, steep grade, and skewed alignment lead to chronic safety issues and traffic congestion.

◆ More Teaching, Less Testing



Senator Dinniman continues to lead the charge against expanding expensive and excessive standardized testing in our schools. Between the state and local school districts, Pennsylvania has either already spent or contracted to spend more than \$1 billion on standardized testing and related costs in the last nine years. Dinniman, who serves as minority chair of the Senate Education Committee, continues to work to replace the Keystone Exams with the SAT, which most high school students already take.

◆ Fighting for Fair Districts

How can we have fair elections if we don't have fair districts?

Senator Dinniman continues to lead the effort to end gerrymandering by establishing a redistricting process that is independent of politics and the legislature.

“Several congressional districts in our region have gained national notoriety for how obviously they were drawn to favor incumbents and majority candidates,” Dinniman said. “Real redistricting reform is needed to protect the integrity of government. The voters not only deserve it, they demand it.”

Late last year, Dinniman presented testimony in two cases

challenging the congressional redistricting process in both state and federal court. As of this writing, the state Supreme Court ruled that Pennsylvania’s 2011 map of congressional districts ‘plainly and palpably violates the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’ and directed the legislature to redraw the map and submit it to the governor and the court for approval. However, additional legal challenges may occur.

“Gerrymandering is the wrong way for **either party** to go about redistricting and it must stop. The only way to do that is to change the



process. It’s high time that we removed the influence of politics and politicians from redistricting,” Dinniman said.

Dinniman remains a vocal and consistent supporter of **Senate Bill 22** to establish an Independent Citizen’s Redistricting Commission to redraw legislative districts. He also co-sponsored similar legislation in the previous legislative session.

◆ Reforming Harrisburg

Our government ought to run effectively, efficiently, and with the least cost to the taxpayers. Senator Dinniman is working to reform Harrisburg to ensure it does just that. He has introduced and supports several bills to cut costs, end perks, reduce the size of government, and hold lawmakers accountable.

■ **Smaller Government:** Pennsylvania has one of the largest full-time legislatures in the nation. Dinniman is working to reduce its size and streamline operations to save taxpayer dollars. He voted for and continues to support **House Bill 153** to cut the size of the House by one-quarter. Since it requires a constitutional change, the bill, which was passed last session, must be passed again this session before it goes to the people of Pennsylvania in a referendum vote. Dinniman also supports an amended version of House Bill 153 and, a separate piece of legislation, **House Bill 253**, both of which call for cutting the size of the Senate by at least one-quarter.

■ **Eliminate Perks:** Did you know that state lawmakers can automatically collect \$175 for every day they are in session in Harrisburg – money that comes in addition to salary? Since being elected, Dinniman has never accepted a single per diem, saving taxpayers more than \$125,000 in the

process. He has repeatedly called for an end to the system of automatic per diems and is a co-sponsor of **Senate Bill 732** to terminate it once and for all. If lawmakers want to receive funds for job-related expenses, they need to submit receipts like everyone else.

■ **Holding Lawmakers Accountable:** When budgets run late or are incomplete, it’s legislators and the governor who should pay, not the people. Dinniman introduced **Senate Bill 830** to impose real consequences on them when budgets run late. It calls for the legislature to remain in continuous session, meeting every day without leave, without pay, without reimbursements, and without per diems, if a complete budget is not passed and signed by July 1. The same goes for the governor, his senior staff, and cabinet members.

■ **Balanced Budgets:** In addition, Senate Bill 830 requires the legislature to pass a complete budget – meaning a spending plan with sufficient revenue to fund it. It’s very simple: **you can’t decide what you’re going to spend before you know how much you have.** The legislature’s practice of passing a spending plan at the eleventh hour or later and putting off passage of a revenue package for weeks or months at a time is unacceptable. Families and



businesses across the Commonwealth face real consequences if they don’t balance their checkbooks or pay their bills on time. So should the legislature.

“These are important common-sense reforms. Legislators should have to prove job-related expenses before getting reimbursed, they shouldn’t get paid if they don’t do their jobs, and when it comes to the size of government, sometimes smaller is better,” Dinniman, who serves on the Senate State Government Committee, said. “Let’s pass these measures to help restore trust, transparency, and fiscal responsibility in Harrisburg.”

In addition, Dinniman emphasized that Pennsylvania cannot continue to rely on borrow-and-spend budgeting to make up for late and unbalanced budgets.

“This year we borrowed \$1.5 billion to make up for shortfalls from an unbalanced budget in 2016-17,” Dinniman said. “With interest, we’ll end up owing \$2 billion. That is an outrageous and unconscionable burden to put on Pennsylvania taxpayers and families.”



STATE SENATOR **ANDY DINNIMAN**

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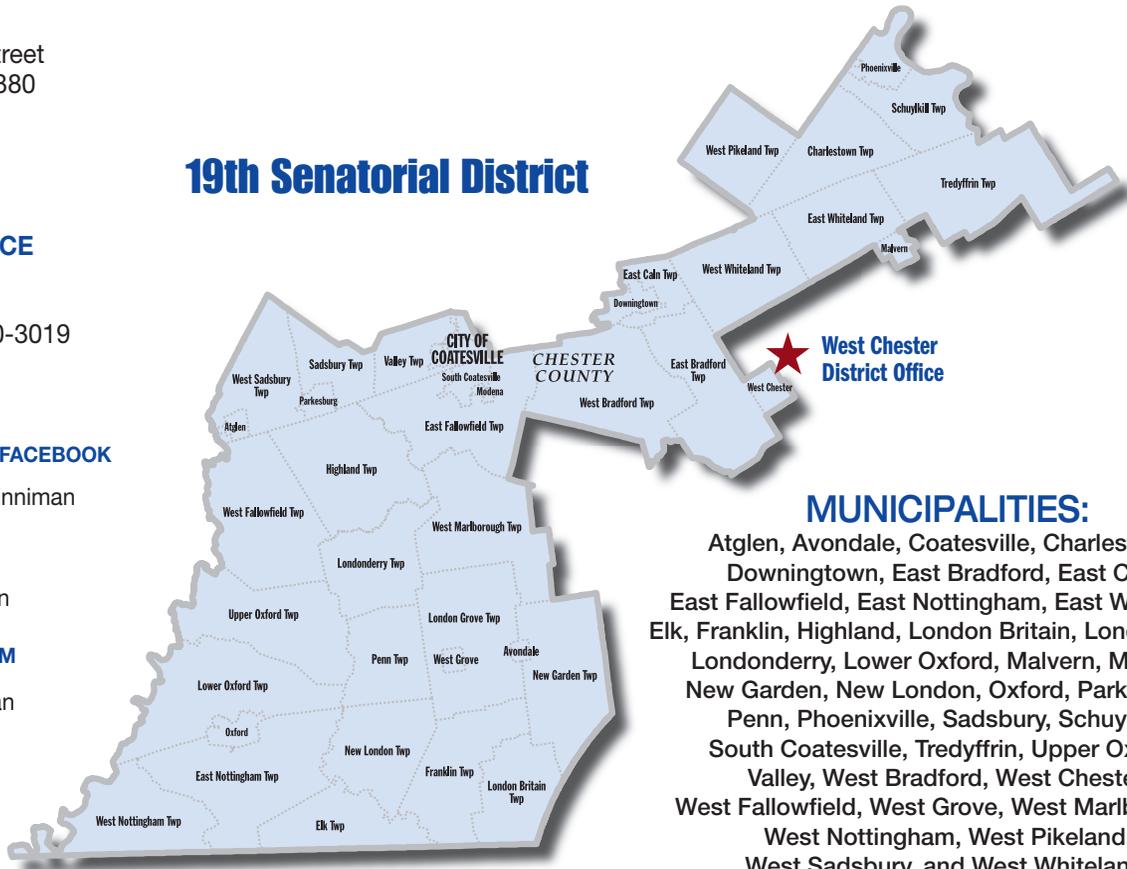
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19th Senatorial District



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