

Good morning everyone.

My name is Barron Shaw, and I am the President of the York County Farm Bureau.

As a 7th generation farmer on the same piece of property, I identify myself first as a steward of my land. I work hard to prevent erosion, improve its fertility, and value its biodiversity. No farmer wants to see his topsoil wash downstream, nor waste valuable money on nutrients that are not needed or are leached away before they are used. Farmers are highly invested in the ecology of their land and we all want to leave our farms in better condition than the day we started.

The results from York County's water monitoring initiative are good news for York County farmers and all residents of York County. Given the high amount of media concern and proposed regulations in our watershed, few would have expected the results that we've seen. I hope that environmental advocates and regulators see it as good news as well. These positive results cannot and should not be dismissed by those who might be disappointed to learn that farmers aren't the problem they have been made out to be.

Instead, it is a great opportunity for those who develop these complicated models to look more closely at their assumptions, their data, and the algorithms that generate results which perhaps should be taken with a grain of salt.. We hope they work with us to find out why we are doing so much better than expected. If there is something we are doing well, then perhaps it can be replicated elsewhere.

Whatever is found, the good news is that the stream monitors will continue to provide data in order to help validate future improved versions of the models. Public trust will depend on that.

Many people today have become cynical about the government's role in our daily lives. But the project you've heard about today is a great example of local government doing the right thing at the right time. On behalf of the York County Farm Bureau I'd like to thank the York County Commissioners for their work on this project over the last 5 years.

I'd also like to encourage other government leaders to learn something from York County's experience. Regulations and policies that have large impacts on a wide segment of our economy should only be undertaken after there is considerable evidence that the problems are real, and the solutions are effective.