

My name is Tim Morey, and I serve as a Township Supervisor right here in Blooming Grove Township. I am also a local business owner who works directly with property owners, contractors, and families trying to build homes and invest in our communities. I sit on the board of our County Conservation District, and also on the boards of the PBA and our local builders' association. I truly see the affordable housing crisis from every angle.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding contractor and building policies, particularly the increasing challenges tied to permitting, environmental oversight, and DEP-related regulations that are making construction unnecessarily expensive and difficult across rural Pennsylvania.

I want to be very clear at the outset: I believe in protecting our environment. Pike County is one of the most beautiful regions in this Commonwealth, and preserving our water, forests, and natural resources matters deeply to the people who live there. But I also believe we have reached a point where the balance between environmental protection and practical development has been lost.

Right now, too many working families, small contractors, and local businesses are being priced out of the ability to build.

And in rural counties like ours, that has serious consequences.

Over the last several years, we have seen the cost of construction rise dramatically. Inflation, labor shortages, and material costs are already putting pressure on housing affordability. But layered on top of that are permit delays, overlapping reviews, inconsistent interpretations of DEP requirements, engineering mandates, and administrative costs that continue to grow year after year.

For many projects, especially small residential builds, the regulatory costs now rival the actual construction costs.

That is not sustainable.

We regularly hear from residents who own land, pay taxes, and simply want to build a modest home for their family. Instead, they face months of delays, thousands of dollars in studies and permitting fees, and uncertainty at every stage of the process.

Small contractors are struggling as well. Many are not large corporations with legal departments and compliance teams. They are local tradesmen — excavators, builders, septic installers, and small business owners trying to make a living honestly and responsibly. Every delay costs them money. Every unclear regulation creates risk. Every additional layer of bureaucracy discourages investment.

The end result is fewer homes being built, higher prices for consumers, and less economic growth in the communities that need it most.

As a Township Supervisor, I also see the impact this has on municipalities. We want responsible development. We want tax growth. We want young families to stay in our communities instead of moving elsewhere because they cannot afford to build here.

But local governments are increasingly caught in the middle. Residents expect answers from us, yet many decisions are controlled through state-level processes that can be slow, inconsistent, and difficult for ordinary citizens to navigate.

What we need is not the elimination of oversight. We need modernization, consistency, and common sense.

First, we need faster and more predictable permitting timelines. Applicants should not be left waiting indefinitely with no certainty on when a decision will be made. Delays increase financing costs, delay projects, and create unnecessary frustration.

Second, there needs to be greater consistency in interpretation and enforcement. Too often, requirements vary depending on the reviewer, region, or office involved. Contractors and property owners should not feel like the rules change from project to project.

Third, the Commonwealth should take a serious look at the cumulative cost burden being placed on small-scale residential construction. Regulations may appear reasonable individually, but collectively, they can make a project financially impossible.

And finally, rural communities need a stronger voice in policy discussions. What works in dense urban areas does not always work in Pike County or other rural parts of Pennsylvania. Our geography, infrastructure, lot sizes, and economic realities are different. State policy should recognize those differences instead of applying one-size-fits-all approaches.

Affordable housing is not just a city issue. It is a rural issue too.

Young families cannot afford to build.
Seniors cannot afford to downsize.
Contractors cannot afford delays.
Municipalities cannot afford stagnation.

If we continue down this path, we risk creating communities where only wealthy individuals can afford to develop property, while working-class Pennsylvanians are pushed further out of the market.

That is not the future we should want for this Commonwealth.

I believe there is room for bipartisan solutions that protect the environment while also supporting responsible growth and affordability. We can streamline permitting without sacrificing standards. We can improve coordination between agencies. We can reduce unnecessary administrative burdens while still holding bad actors accountable.

The people I represent are not asking for shortcuts. They are asking for fairness, clarity, and a process that respects their time, investment, and ability to build a future in their own communities.

As both a business owner and Township Supervisor, I can tell you that local residents are growing frustrated. They feel that government processes have become too expensive, too slow, and too disconnected from real-world conditions faced by working people.

I urge this committee to consider reforms that make construction and development more attainable for ordinary Pennsylvanians while maintaining reasonable environmental protections.

Pennsylvania should be a place where families can afford to build, businesses can afford to grow, and local communities can continue to thrive.

Thank you again for your time, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.