

# Environmental Clean Up *and* Responsibility Act

ADVOCACY PACKET

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## Dear Friend,

Thank you for taking the time to be part of this effort. The Environmental Clean Up and Responsibility Act (ECRA) exists for one simple reason: when a community is harmed by environmental contamination, people deserve swift action, clear accountability, and a government that shows up for them. No family should have to live with uncertainty about their health or safety while bureaucratic delays or corporate inaction drag on. ECRA is about closing that gap in our current laws and making sure Pennsylvania is prepared to respond when residents need help most.

But no bill, no matter how strong, crosses the finish line on its own. Meaningful change in Harrisburg has always depended on engaged and informed citizens who speak up, share their stories, and remind lawmakers who they serve. Legislators listen when they hear directly from constituents, especially when those voices are organized, persistent, and grounded in the real community impact that state laws can have. Your calls, emails, letters to the editor, and conversations can be the difference between a good idea and a law that protects people across our Commonwealth.

This advocacy packet is designed to make it easier for you to get involved, whether you're reaching out to another legislator, sharing information online, or helping educate your neighbors. Every action matters. By participating, you are helping ensure that our constitutional right to clean water in Pennsylvania is not just a promise, but a guarantee backed by accountability and action.

I'm grateful for your willingness to stand up for your community and for communities across Pennsylvania. Together, we can move ECRA forward and make sure that when a spill contaminates a neighborhood, our government has the authority to step in immediately, clean it up, and hold the polluter accountable.

This legislation ensures that when hazardous spills occur in residential communities, cleanup is mandatory, action is taken quickly, and polluters, not taxpayers, are held accountable. It also gives the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection the authority it needs to step in immediately when public health and drinking water are at risk.

*With gratitude and determination,*  
**Steve Santarsiero**



## How You Can Advocate *for the* ECRA Act

SB 1157 / HB 2178

### Leverage your connections on social media.

- You can use any of these social media graphics to post about ECRA. Help us build support for the bill by posting into larger Facebook and Reddit groups you're a part of. Make sure to share your story as to why you support ECRA. People are more likely to engage with a personalized message!

### Build support in the press.

- Submit a letter to the editor to your local paper or to one nearby that covers another district! You can use the letter to the editor guide in this packet for advice on writing a letter to the editor to support ECRA. Make sure to keep it personal and share your story.

### Reach out to friends and relatives in other districts.

- Senator Santarsiero and Representative Warren already support ECRA – they introduced it! If you have any connections in other state house and senate districts, ask them to call and write to their representatives in favor of ECRA. You can send them the phone and email scripts in this packet so it's as easy to reach out as possible! We particularly need to build support in the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy committee; you can find the list of Senators in that committee [here](#).

### Ask for meetings in other districts.

- Your story matters and other legislators should hear it. Normally, we wouldn't advise meeting with representatives when you're not their constituent but in this case, you have direct experience with why ECRA is necessary. Most representatives and senators have a form on their website where you can request a meeting. If they don't you can call their office and request to meet with them in their district office or in Harrisburg, whichever location is more convenient for you. If you have a friend who is a constituent who would come with you, even better!

# Environmental Clean Up *and* Responsibility Act

SB 1157 / HB 2178 - Talking Points

## Talking Points

### Core Message

*When a spill happens in a residential community:*

- Cleanup *must* be mandatory.
- The state *must* be able to act immediately.
- The polluter *must* pay, not the taxpayer.

### The Problem

- Nearly one year after a jet fuel pipeline leak contaminated private wells in Upper Makefield Township, Families are still waiting for full answers and remediation.
- The spill exposed a major gap in Pennsylvania law when environmental contamination happens in residential, non-industrial areas.
- Current statutes were never designed for active spills or emergencies that threaten people's health in real time.

### Why Current Laws Fall Short

- Current laws are largely voluntary and designed for redevelopment, not emergencies.
- There are no enforceable deadlines for investigation or cleanup in spill situations.
- PA's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) lacks clear authority to immediately take over a cleanup and recover costs later.
- Communities can be left in limbo while polluters debate responsibility and remediation plans.

The result is delayed action, uncertainty, and eroded public trust.

### What This Bill Does

- Requires immediate action when hazardous substances are released, including containment, investigation, and cleanup.
- Makes cleanup mandatory, not optional, when residents are at risk.
- Holds polluters fully accountable through strict, joint-and-several liability so taxpayers are not left footing the bill.
- Guarantees residential-level cleanup standards, protecting drinking water, soil, and air for unrestricted residential use.
- Empowers DEP to act decisively, including stepping in immediately when responsible parties fail to act or time is critical.



# Environmental Clean Up *and* Responsibility Act

SB 1157 / HB 2178 - Talking Points

## Talking Points

### What This Bill Does (Cont.)

- Creates enforceable timelines so communities are not left waiting indefinitely.
- Strengthens funding and accountability by directing penalties and cost recoveries into the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Fund.
- Ensures transparency, requiring a public-facing portal so residents can track cleanup progress and understand risks.

### Why This Approach Works

- The framework closely mirrors New Jersey's Spill Act, one of the strongest spill-response laws in the country.
- New Jersey's model has been in place for decades and provides clarity, speed, and accountability.
- This bill brings Pennsylvania in line with proven best practices.

### Why It Matters

- No Pennsylvanian should have to wonder whether their drinking water is safe while lawyers debate process.
- Environmental emergencies require speed, clarity, and accountability, not voluntary compliance.
- This legislation puts residents first and restores confidence that the law will protect communities when it matters most.



# Environmental Clean Up *and* Responsibility Act

## Phone Script

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_, and I'm a constituent calling from \_\_\_\_ [town or ZIP code]. I'm calling to ask whether \_\_\_\_\_ [Senator/Representative Name] is currently a cosponsor of the Pennsylvania Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act [SB 1157 in the Senate or HB 2178 in the House].

*If they **ARE** already a cosponsor:*

**That's great to hear.** Thank you for letting me know. I really appreciate the Senator's/Representative's leadership on this issue. This bill is important to me because it ensures immediate cleanup when spills happen in residential communities and makes sure polluters, not taxpayers, are held accountable. Please pass along my thanks for their support!

*If they **ARE NOT** a cosponsor:*

**Thank you for checking.** I'm calling to strongly encourage the Senator/Representative to cosponsor the Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act. This bill is important to me because it ensures immediate cleanup when spills happen in residential communities and makes sure polluters, not taxpayers, are held accountable. I hope the Senator/Representative will consider adding their name as a cosponsor. Thank you for your time and for passing this message along. I appreciate the work you do for our community.



# Environmental Clean Up *and* Responsibility Act

## Email Script

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am a constituent from [Town/ZIP Code]. I am writing to ask you to cosponsor the Pennsylvania Environmental Cleanup and Responsibility Act (ECRA), [SB 1157 in the Senate or HB 2178 in the House].

This legislation ensures that when hazardous spills occur in residential communities, cleanup is mandatory, action is taken quickly, and polluters, not taxpayers, are held accountable. It also gives the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection the authority it needs to step in immediately when public health and drinking water are at risk.

I urge you to add your name as a cosponsor and support this important effort to protect Pennsylvania families and communities.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your ZIP Code]

## Advocating for ECRA with a Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor is an easy way to support a piece of legislation and spread the word about it in your community.

### Why should you write a letter to the editor:

- Reach your neighbors who read letter to the editor pages
- Catch the eye of elected officials who pay attention to letter to the editor pages
- Inspire others to act through a call to action

### How to Outline a Letter to the Editor in Support of Legislation

- Letters should aim to be between 150 to 300 words (check word limits)
- Remember a letter to the editor is a persuasive piece of writing, you're making an argument that something is wrong and there's a solution that should be implemented to fix it!
- Use the ECRA talking points for ideas/evidence to support your argument

## Letter Structure

### Hook

- Reel people in, connect the issue to something in the news or a personal story (like the Upper Makefield Pipeline Leak)
- Establish why you care and why people should listen to you

### Problem

- What is the problem that has to be addressed
- Make it timely, provide examples of why this must be addressed now

### Solution

- What would fix this problem?
- What proves that this solution would work?
- Make sure to specify the bill number (SB 1157 / HB 2178)

### Call to Action

- What can readers do to make this solution happen?
- Who needs to act for change to happen?

Call lawmakers out by name and ask them to cosponsor/support the bill you care about.

## Advocating for ECRA with a Letter to the Editor

### Publishing a Letter to the Editor

Find a local paper to submit to that regularly publishes letters to the editor

#### Local examples:

- [Bucks County Herald] [Letters to the Herald](#) | [buckscountyherald.com](http://buckscountyherald.com)  
(email: [herald@buckscountyherald.com](mailto:herald@buckscountyherald.com); word limit 250 )
- [Inquirer] [Letters to the Editor](#) | [www.inquirer.com](http://www.inquirer.com)  
(email: [letters@inquirer.com](mailto:letters@inquirer.com); word limit 150)
- [Bucks County Beacon] [Letters](#) | [buckscountybeacon.com](http://buckscountybeacon.com)  
(email: [info@buckscountybeacon.com](mailto:info@buckscountybeacon.com); no stated limit so aim for 250 words)

The ACLU has a good [list of newspapers](#) throughout the state that accept letters to the editor, but we can't confirm it's completely up to date

Make sure you only submit to one newspaper at a time. If you submit to multiple and they don't have exclusivity, they may not publish you in the future.