

## **Conservation Groups in Pennsylvania, Nation Score Victories in 2006 Election**

In the 2006 midterm elections in Pennsylvania, 22 open space conservation referendums appeared on the ballot. Conservation and land use groups around the state, such as 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, experienced a victory when 20 of the proposed ballot initiatives were passed by voters, totaling more than \$150 million in funding for conservation.

Both property and income tax increases, and bond measures were approved to raise funding for the purchase of open space, land easements, parks, and farmland, as well as funding dedicated to efforts for conservation of those lands. Conservation and land use groups in Pennsylvania have long been working to raise voter awareness of these issues. Pennsylvania has some of the most fertile farmland in the world, as well as scenic parks and forests, and as expanding suburban development infringes on those lands, more efforts must be made to save them.

In 2006, nearly all of the initiatives that passed were concentrated in counties in southeastern Pennsylvania. In Whitemarsh Township, Montgomery County, for example, voters approved a 0.25 percent income tax increase for the preservation of open space and farmland, which will generate revenues in excess of \$20 million. In Upper Dublin Township, also located in Montgomery County, voters approved a \$30 million bond for the acquisition of land and easements to protect natural and cultural resources. In other municipalities in southeastern Pennsylvania,

Pennsylvania ranked third in the number of initiatives proposed, but ranked first in the number passed. Thirty seven ballot initiatives were proposed in Massachusetts, while 18 passed. In New Jersey, 26 appeared on the ballot, and 16 initiatives were passed.

Nationally, 134 measures were passed in 2006, granting more than \$29 billion to open space conservation and farmland preservation efforts around the country. Since 1988, voters have authorized ballot initiatives that quadrupled dedicated funding for conservation issues.

For a detailed database of open space ballot initiatives in Pennsylvania, as well as in other states, visit the Trust for Public Land's [scorecard](#).