Governor Josh Shapiro

March 26, 2024

Governor Shapiro,

The actions you took against climate activists on March 19 were unwarranted. Blocking peaceful protest in the Capitol threatens the very democracy you swore an oath to preserve.

Intending to deliver a letter to your office, the members of Pennsylvania Action on Climate were met with a police presence in front of your closed door and threatened with arrest if they refused to leave immediately.

The PAC members were told, “You have to do it through an appointment and today it is closed,” when they attempted their delivery. The officer who told them might not have known that the group is among many whose requests for meetings since before you were sworn in have gone unacknowledged by you and your staff.

Last summer, you told former Miss Earth, Lindsey Coffey, “I don’t believe that governments will be able to make the kind of change necessary, speaking in the short period of time we need to really address climate change, without folks on the outside influencing the process.” A few weeks after the meeting with Ms. Coffey, you shared a text line the public could use to contact you following an executive order you’d signed that spring declaring that there should be “no wrong door to government.”

Climate activists attempting to “influence the process” have been met with nothing but closed doors, usually with armed guards stationed in front of them. This time, when “folks on the outside” attempted to avail themselves of the communication pathway that you yourself have apparently encouraged, they were forcefully turned away. Shutting down half of the Capitol building on March 19 to keep them away was an alarming overreaction and overreach.

We are not seeking an apology. Rather, we demand that you use this regrettable experience to rethink your positions on climate change and first amendment rights to become the champion we all need.

Respectfully,

Better Path Coalition
Pennsylvania Action on Climate
350 Pittsburgh
Breathe Easy Susquehanna County
Camp White Pine
Centre County Greens
Climate Reality Project: Susquehanna Valley PA chapter
Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Food & Water Watch
LAWPA (Local Authority Western PA)
Marcellus Outreach Butler
MarchOnHarrisburg
MILPA (Movement of Immigrant Leaders in PA)
Move Past Plastic (MPP)
NEPA Green Coalition
No False Solutions PA
North Braddock Residents For Our Future
PA Poor Peoples Campaign
Patriots From The Oil & Gas Shales
Physicians for Social Responsibility PA
Project CoffeeHouse
Protect PT
Putting Down Roots
Save our Susquehanna
Sierra Club Moshannon Group
South Fayette Township Democratic Committee
WASEPA

Michael Bagdes-Canning, Butler
Linnea Bond, Philadelphia
Jill Diskin, Allegheny
Deron Gabriel, Allegheny
Ellen Gerhart, Huntingdon
Ellen Gerhart, Huntingdon
Eric Gjertsen, Berks
Gwynn Goldring, Allegheny
Barbara Gurley, Philadelphia
Joe Guthrie, Allegheny
Helen Hazi, Allegheny
Marci Henzi, Allegheny
Norman Koerner, Philadelphia
Steven Lachman, Centre
Barbara Laxon, McKean
Marcia Lehman, Beaver
Kevin Long, Perry
Dean Marshall, Clinton
Teresa Muldrow, Philadelphia
Roberts, Centre
Barbara Sims, Westmoreland
Terri Supowitz, Allegheny
Marian Szmyd, Westmoreland
Stephanie Ulmer, Allegheny
Susan Volz, Montgomery
Elise Yoder, Allegheny