

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUDGET HEARING WRAP

Wednesday, February 25, 2026



General Overview:

Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Secretary Rick Siger testified before the House Appropriations Committee today. House Republicans focused their questions on how our energy industry intersects with economic growth - especially following Pennsylvania's withdrawal from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Republicans also asked how DCED is ensuring that economic growth programs benefit the entire Commonwealth, the need to efficiently expand broadband access to underserved areas, the governor's housing plan, and efforts to enhance affordability in Pennsylvania.

Key Takeaways:

- For DCED, the Governor is proposing \$277.8 million in General Fund spending for Fiscal Year 2026-27, a decrease of \$236.4 million, or 46.0%, from the current fiscal year.
 - Secretary Siger agreed that many of the governor's proposed cuts are in successful programs that are likely to be restored during budget negotiations.
- Unleashing the energy industry is essential to growing our economy. House Republicans called out DCED for not having a plan to grow our energy sector. Secretary Siger agreed with House Republicans that we must increase our energy generation and noted that it is a critical area for economic growth. The secretary agreed that the withdrawal from RGGI is having a positive impact on our economy.
- The governor is proposing to spend \$1 billion on his new Housing Action Plan. Republican Members expressed concern that government spending alone will not solve housing issues and pressed DCED to listen to private-sector developers and home builders so regulatory barriers can be removed.
- The energy and housing industries are key to support affordability, but government spending is no substitute for regulatory reform and government efficiency, as the Members shared.
- The growth of data centers holds great economic potential across the Commonwealth. House Republicans asked how DCED has incentivized some projects that have already been announced and what we can do to ensure future projects are successful.
- Ensuring broadband access in rural Pennsylvania is a crucial initiative for federal, state, and local governments. Members once again expressed concern about projects being delayed and possibly jeopardized by an unnecessary labor dispute.
- Members also expressed a desire to see DCED focus on growing our economy by attracting investment from the US military and defense contractors.
- House Republicans consistently pressed DCED on how their programs help ALL Pennsylvanians.

Notable Q&A:



Rep. Jamie Barton discusses the importance of energy for Pennsylvania's economy and asks why DCED does not have a comprehensive energy plan.

Rep. Jim Rigby asked why and how \$10 million in taxpayer dollars will be spent to assist with the NFL draft in Pittsburgh this year.



Rep. Marci Mustello questioned DCED about the incentives offered to major data center projects and how DCED plans to attract and retain data centers.