

## My Fellow Pennsylvanians –

Pennsylvania is a Commonwealth rich in resources. We have been blessed with abundant natural resources, forests, streams, rivers and farmland that is the envy of many; with historic resources that reflect the key role Pennsylvania played in the birth and growth of our nation and the preservation of our freedom; educational institutions that graduate some of the brightest minds in our country; urban centers that served as the foundation of the industrial revolution. We are at a critical crossroad, however, and local government officials, business officials, educators and citizens across the Commonwealth are increasingly recognizing the necessity of wisely using, preserving and protecting our land and natural resources.

Thomas Jefferson, former president and one of our nation's greatest champions of the rights of man and representative democracy once said..."Our land was not given to us by our parents and grandparents....It is on loan from our children and grandchildren."

Collectively, we have begun to acknowledge the vital connection between comprehensive planning and effective community and economic development. Indeed, our economy, our environment and our very quality of life are dependent on the decisions each of us makes regarding the use of this precious resource. The decisions we make today will determine whether our children and our children's children will be able to enjoy our natural and historic resources and the quality of life that we treasure.

Amendments to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code in 2000 provided for the Governor's Center for Local Government Services to issue a Land Use and Growth Management Report at five-year intervals beginning in 2005. I am pleased to be able to present this first report to state and local decision-makers and to all Pennsylvanians.

This report is a snapshot look at the "state of our state" with respect to land use issues. For example, the 2000 amendments to the Municipalities Planning Code provided a number of special tools and incentives to encourage more intergovernmental approaches to municipal planning. One of the key findings of this report has been the response of local government to those incentives. By September 2005, approximately 760, or 30 percent of local governments, had undertaken multimunicipal comprehensive planning processes. This demonstrates the value of the changes in the Planning Code and represents a real recognition of the importance of cooperative planning. This number will only continue to grow in future years as we work collaboratively to provide Pennsylvanians with a high quality of life, whether they choose to live in a rural community, a suburb, a small town or a city.

I trust you will find our report insightful on the progress made over the last five years on land use issues in the Commonwealth and will join with me in our collective effort to build upon the successes achieved to date in the coming years.

Fred Reddig

Executive Director, Governor's Center for Local Government Services