

Final Optimized 5-Minute Legislative Testimony

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

When we talk about community infrastructure, we often think about roads, bridges, and utilities. But one of the most important investments we can make in our communities is **recreation infrastructure** — the parks and public spaces that support the health, quality of life, and economic vitality of the people we serve.

This morning, I'd like to briefly highlight three things:
the role Buhl Park plays in our region, the broader community and economic impact of recreation, and why continued investment in parks matters.

Buhl Park serves as a **regional recreation hub for the Shenango Valley**, providing opportunities for residents across multiple municipalities.

Although Buhl Park is **privately operated**, it is open to the public and serves **thousands of residents each year**. Families come to the park to spend time together, children learn and play there, and residents of all ages benefit from access to outdoor recreation and green space.

Importantly, we work to ensure that these opportunities remain **accessible and affordable**, so that everyone in our community can benefit.

In many ways, parks like Buhl Park function as **essential community infrastructure**. Just like libraries, schools, and other public assets, parks provide spaces that support community health, connection, and quality of life.

Recreation infrastructure also plays a critical role in **economic development**.

Today, businesses and employees increasingly evaluate quality-of-life factors when deciding where to locate or where to build their careers. Communities that offer strong recreational amenities are better positioned to **attract employers, retain families, and compete for talent**.

Investments in parks help strengthen communities and make them more attractive places to live and work. They support long-term economic stability and help ensure that communities across Pennsylvania remain competitive.

Programs that provide funding support for parks and nonprofit organizations are essential to maintaining these community assets.

Like many nonprofit organizations, Buhl Park relies on partnerships and grant opportunities to maintain facilities, improve infrastructure, and expand programming that benefits the public.

State support has played an important role in helping parks like Buhl Park maintain facilities, improve infrastructure, and expand programming for the public. Those investments allow organizations like ours to continue serving residents across the Shenango Valley and ensure that recreation opportunities remain accessible for future generations.

We are very grateful for the Commonwealth's continued support and the investment that helps ensure parks like ours remain accessible resources for the communities we serve.

The impact of Buhl Park extends beyond recreation alone.

The park also serves as a **regional draw**, bringing visitors into our community. Those visitors not only enjoy the park, but they also discover the many other businesses and assets our region has to offer.

In that way, the park helps support the broader community and contributes to the overall vitality of the Shenango Valley.

Buhl Park is a privately operated park, but it functions as public recreation infrastructure for the entire Shenango Valley.

In closing, recreation should be viewed as **essential community infrastructure**.

Parks like Buhl Park strengthen communities, support economic development, and improve quality of life for residents of all ages.

Continued investment in recreation infrastructure helps ensure that communities like ours remain **vibrant places to live, work, and raise families**.

Thank you again for your time and for your continued support of parks and recreation and of Buhl Park.