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May 4, 2026

Secretary Cindy Dunn
Rachel Carson State Office Building
1000 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17122-1000

Dear Secretary Dunn,

We are writing to you to express our concerns about the planned full-season closure of Ridge Campground for the entire 2027 season. There are more than 30 local businesses in the Cook Forest area that depend on tourism for survival and request your immediate intervention.

The Ridge Campground, one of the largest in Pennsylvania's state park system, contains approximately 210 campsites and serves thousands of families each year. A complete shutdown for an entire season is not simply just an inconvenience; it is an economic disruption of serious consequences. This decision will directly reduce revenue across our entire region, force layoffs, and place some small businesses at risk of closure. The summer camping season is the difference between profitability and failure.

While we fully understand the need to modernize the park's infrastructure, we feel the current plan is excessive, avoidable and economically damaging. The plan is to construct three new shower houses and to tear down the four existing shower houses. Why are the new shower houses being moved to completely new locations? The cost associated with moving them seems unnecessary. Closing an entire campground for a full year to complete limited infrastructure upgrades demonstrates a lack of consideration for the surrounding businesses and the families who rely on access to this destination.

May we find practical alternatives that would allow these improvements to proceed without devastating the economy? Phasing the improvements would be best so portions of the campground stay open throughout the entire season. This would let prospective visitors know about ongoing construction and how it could get noisy at times. The off season would be the perfect time to schedule the most disruptive work.

In addition to the economic harm, this closure displaces thousands of families who have long-standing traditions at Cook Forest. Once these families are forced to find alternatives there is no guarantee they will return. The long-term damage could extend far beyond 2027.

We respectfully request that you review this decision and direct the appropriate agencies to reconsider the current plan. We are asking for a solution that allows improvements without a complete shutdown. Time is critical and action is needed now to prevent lasting economic damage to the community.

Sincerely,



Rep. Josh Bashline, District #63

Rep. Kathy Rapp, District #65

Rep. Brian Smith, District #66