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Honorable Bryan Cutler
PO Box 202100
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2100

RE: HB 1815 and 1816

Dear Representative Cutler:

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., with headquarters in Trexlertown outside of Allentown, support your legislative efforts to amend the Pennsylvania's Constitution to change the method by which Pennsylvania selects appellate level judges from a popular election system to an appointment system. Air Products firmly believes that a properly constructed candidate screening and selection system, like those in your bills, will improve the quality, fairness, and ethics of our appellate judiciary.

The current popular election system relies heavily upon lawyers, law firms, and organizations supporting specific issues, as primary sources of campaign funds. This fact creates inherent conflicts of interest and undermines the public's confidence in the independence of the judiciary. Candidates' ballot position and county of residence have emerged as key factors in election outcomes. Neither factor speaks to a candidate's credentials as an appellate judge. The realities of the election system limit the pool of lawyers who would like to serve on the appellate bench.

The debate over the election of appellate judges frequently devolves into a false choice between choosing to side with individuals seeking redress in our courts versus corporate defendants. Our company believes that expanding and improving the quality of the appellate judge pool in Pennsylvania benefits all categories of litigants, whether the parties are large corporations contesting interpretation of contracts, citizens appealing land use decisions made by local governments, or individuals suing large corporations in personal injury actions.

For the reasons referenced, Air Products supports your bills and urges the Judiciary Committee to approve them for consideration by the full House.

Very truly yours,

John D. Stanley
Senior Vice President and General Counsel

cc: Members, House Judiciary Committee