



Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

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Providing leadership and advocacy for the enhancement of our fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of all hunters, trappers, anglers and conservationists. Protecting our 2nd Amendment Rights.

House Game & Fisheries Committee Hearing on Legislation to Increase License Fees/Set Own Fees April 7, 2016

Chairman Gillespie, Chairman Harhai, Members of the Committee:

The Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs (PFSC), the largest and oldest organization of hunters, anglers, trappers, conservationists and second amendment advocates, was founded in 1932 by conservation legends of this state. The PFSC represents the interest of Pennsylvania's sportsmen and sportswomen, and works with the commonwealth's resource agencies that are charged with managing wildlife, waterways, fish, game and related conservation matters. PFSC's membership of clubs, individuals and statewide organizations represents over 70,000 sportsmen and women.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide testimony regarding legislative proposals to increase license fees and/or allow the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission to set their own fees relative to hunting, trapping fishing and boating.

Historically, the PFSC has been supportive of license fee increases. This is due to several factors. First, Federation members understand the agencies do not receive General Fund revenue and a large portion of their operating budgets comes from license fees. Second, the mission of these agencies is very important to our members' activities and interests. Without the necessary revenue, crucial programs, field personnel and staff would need to be cut. Finally, we recognize the agencies have received legislative approval for license fee increases at sporadic intervals, spanning lengthy periods of time, often long beyond planned budget time frames, making it difficult for them to make long-term plans or fulfill their strategic plans.

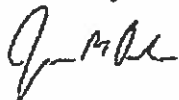
Both the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission have demonstrated compelling cases to our members justifying a dire need for increased funding. After discussing these proposals with our delegates and officers, this letter is to advise you and your committee members the **PFSC supports the efforts to increase license fees for both agencies, and we support going one step farther and allowing the agencies to have the authority to set their own fees.**

We feel this is absolutely necessary and appropriate so our resource agencies are able to maintain sound fiscal management practices that fulfill their missions. Both Commissions submit annual reports to the Senate and House Game & Fisheries Committees, and are subject to periodic audits by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, so there will still be adequate legislative oversight.

We do not agree with the comments from the naysayers about the agencies becoming greedy and over pricing licenses. Both agencies understand doing so would do more harm than good, and essentially price themselves out of business. While we understand and support the "sunset" provision in the legislation, we would recommend it be extended to five years. We do not feel three years will provide adequate evaluation data.

We appreciate the ability to have input during this process. Please contact John Kline, our Director of Government Affairs, if you have any additional questions as these proposals work their way through the legislative process. We stand ready to play an active role in helping to advance this most important issue expediently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ord".

John Ord, President

cc: Senate Game & Fisheries Committee Members
Executive Director John Arway, PFBC
Executive Director Matt Hough, PGC



Shooting Straight for Better Bowhunting

April 7, 2016

Testimony of the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

To

Game & Fisheries Committee, PA House of Representatives

Chairman Gillespie, Chairman Harhai, Members of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, my name is Wes Waldron and I represent the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania. The UBP was founded in 1985 and has adopted a mission statement that is solidly based upon the support of the wise management of our wildlife and habitat resources utilizing scientific and biologically sound management precepts. We currently have approximately 2800 members bolstered by 52 supporting sportsmen's clubs, and 32 business sponsors. In addition the UBP is a voting member organization of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsman's Clubs. Our organization makes every effort to represent the best interests of Pennsylvania bow hunters while at the same time promoting and protecting the sport of bow hunting.

The UBP considers funding for the Pennsylvania Game Commission to be an issue of the greatest priority, especially when considering that this agency is responsible for the perpetuation and protection of the game and non-game species of the Commonwealth. We are quite cognizant of the fact that the PGC far too frequently suffers from lack of revenue, and that legislation necessary to remedy that situation is in itself far too *infrequent*. While insufficient revenue is generally thought only to affect the agency, in truth it affects almost every citizen of Pennsylvania.

Lack of revenue affects every facet of our state wildlife agency, in staff, manpower, educational outreach, infrastructure, wildlife management and law enforcement; and this eventually results in a loss or reduction of services for not only license buyers, but non-license buyers as well. The UBP has always supported a fully functional agency un-constricted by a lack of revenue, and we have defended increases to license and permit fees even when the cost of the archery license topped the list of increase percentages. The UBP has also supported the concept of supplemental funding for both the PGC and PA Fish & Boat Commission, such as that provided by several other states that earmark a percentage of their state sales tax for their state wildlife agencies.

Not long ago, a bill was introduced in the Legislature that would have created a "tipping fee" to be paid by out-of-state waste haulers dumping in Pennsylvania landfills. Portions of that revenue were to be directed to the PGC and the PF&BC, amongst others. Unfortunately that piece of legislation barely left the starting gate, and once again the specter of a revenue crisis for both agencies crept upon the horizon. As a sportsmen's organization supportive of our game and fish agencies, as well as supportive of those agencies having sufficient funds to properly and effectively fulfill their individual mandates, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania are of the opinion that the General Assembly is and well should be, on the threshold of ensuring that the Commonwealth's game and fish agencies will see an end to underfunding.





Shooting Straight for Better Bowhunting

With the introduction of, and first passing of Senate Bill 1166 that would give the PGC the power to set their own license and permit fees, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania applaud the bi-partisanship of the Senate Game & Fisheries Committee regarding this piece of legislation. We trust that the Senate will act quickly and provide full approval of this bill and that this Committee, and the House of Representative, will act in kind when SB 1166 arrives on their table.

Despite the initial grouching, grumbling, and lamentations that accompany every hunting license increase, those reactions differ little from those heard in the wake of increases to the cost of other recreational endeavors, or food, fuel, and modes and methods of transportation. In our opinion, hunters and non-hunters alike should eventually recognize the advantages of continuing PGC services without the predictable reductions and losses of service that increased costs and diminishing revenue always bring about. We doubt that anyone will miss the prolonged wait for license increase legislation to be drafted, introduced, cussed and discussed, tabled, re-introduced, and who knows for how long. All of that while the coffers of the PGC continue to dwindle to levels that only an exorbitant increase could hope to address for the long-term. Current legislation that would address the PGC's financial needs are the first since 1999, a sixteen year period that the UBP and many others find incomprehensible given the responsibility that the Agency has to our wildlife resources, and the sportsmen and women of Pennsylvania

Although the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania are fully supportive of allowing the Pennsylvania Game Commission to set their own fees, we also believe that the PGC cannot hope to continue to obtain sufficient funding through license fees alone. At some point the cost of license and permit fees will fail to provide the Agency with the majority of revenue required to maintain infrastructure, and fulfill their mandate, and in our organizations opinion we are at that point already. The Agency needs a dependable source of funding or the cost of licenses and permits will indeed become unaffordable for some.

The answer to the issue of supplemental funding for both our fish and game agencies lies directly in the hands of the General Assembly, and while there are more than several options it is ultimately their decision as to where that funding may be secured. The question here is two-fold, can that funding be found, and is there a desire to see our fish and wildlife agencies provided with sufficient sustainable revenue to effectively manage the species they are charged with? The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania feel that the answer to both questions should be a resounding, YES!

Respectfully,

S. Wesley Waldron, Chairman, Legislative Committee

United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

Rick Conley, President





Shooting Straight for Better Bowhunting

March 17, 2016

Gregory L. Raffensperger, Executive Director
Game & Fisheries Committee (R)
House of Representatives
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3040

Executive Director Raffensperger,

The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania (UBP) have always based our support of the management of Pennsylvania's wildlife and wildlife habitat resources on the best scientific and biological practices. In that regard we feel that the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has, and continues to, follow those precepts in the management of both game and non-game species, as well as the natural environment necessary to their survival and well-being.

The UBP strongly feels that those efforts are often hampered by a shortage of revenue and that periodic increases in revenue are necessary in order for that agency to properly and effectively address their mandate. Our organization recognizes that it has been sixteen years since the General Assembly has approved an increase for the PGC, in our opinion, far too long.

Therefore, we wish the Members of the House Game and Fisheries to know that the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania fully support a license increase package for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In addition, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania could also very easily support legislation that would empower the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, to set their own fee's for licenses and permits.

Respectfully,

S. Wesley Waldron, Chairman

Legislative Committee

United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

826 Kellyburg Road

Trout Run, PA 17771

Rick Conley, President

United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

400 Doe Run Road

Manheim, PA 17545





QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 160 • 170 Whitetail Way • Bogart, GA 30622
PHONE: 800.209.3337 • FAX: 706.353.0223 • www.QDMA.com

House Game & Fisheries Committee Hearing on Legislation to Increase License Fees/Set Own Fees 7 April 2016

Chairman Gillespie, Chairman Harhai, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide testimony regarding legislative proposals to increase license fees and/or allow the Game Commission to set their own fees relative to hunting and trapping. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals. The QDMA supports revision of the general hunting and furtaking license fees.

Hunting license sales and the associated Pittman-Robertson funds that accompany them are the lifeblood of state wildlife agencies. Since these funds are so important to management programs we recently surveyed state wildlife agencies to determine the last year they increased the price of their resident hunting license. Overall the years ranged from 1984 (Kansas) to 2016 (Maine). Thirty-two states provided the year, and 72 percent of them have increased their license fees since Pennsylvania last did in 1999. This includes nearly every other state in the northeastern U.S. You can find this state-by-state data on page 27 of our *2016 Whitetail Report* at <https://www.qdma.com/corporate/whitetail-report>.

What does it cost to spend a day at your favorite sporting or entertainment event? Far more than it does for an annual hunting license. We realize that no one wants to spend more for a hunting license, however license sales provide the bulk of funding for our state wildlife agencies, and Pennsylvania's licenses are well below the cost of living increases since their price was last raised. Thanks for your leadership on this matter and for your commitment to Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams

Kip Adams
Director of Education and Outreach



April 6th, 2016

To The Honorable,
Representative Keith Gillespie
Chair, Game and Fisheries Committee
Pennsylvania State House of Representatives
45 East Wing
PO Box 202047
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2047

Reference: SB 1166, Legislation allowing the PA Game Commission to set its own license fees.

Dear Chairman Gillespie,

On behalf of the more than 10,000 adult members of the Pennsylvania State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, I am writing today to express our support for SB 1166 which gives authority to the Pennsylvania Game Commission to set its own license fee schedule.

The National Wild Turkey Federation is a private, non-profit conservation organization that has partnered with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and other partners since 1975. We have raised greater than 3 million dollars to deliver over 250,000 acres of habitat work and have introduced thousands of Pennsylvania residents to the outdoors. Our mission is the "Conservation of the Wild Turkey and the Preservation of our Hunting Heritage."

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is an independent state agency, not supported by the general tax paying population, and has not received a license increase since 1999. Hunting and furbearer license sales are the primary and largest revenue source for the agency. The agency's inability to set its own fee structure compromises their ability to respond to inflation and growing agency and wildlife needs.

Without a license increase, Pennsylvania sportsmen and wildlife will suffer the impacts of expected annual budget deficits. Budget deficits will result in cuts to important programs such as: fewer habitat projects, elimination of the pheasant propagation program, and the cancellation of wildlife conservation officer classes. Most importantly, budget deficits will compromise the agency's ability to maximize Federal Pittman-Robertson Grant Funds, which directly fund wildlife conservation and management, matching the state dollars 3:1.

Again the NWTF supports SB 1166, and we respectfully request that your committee take quick action to send the Bill to the full House for a vote. We stand ready to assist in any way that we can.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ralph Martone
President - Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation





Keystone Elk Country Alliance

www.ExperienceElkCountry.com

*To conserve
and enhance
Pennsylvania's
Elk Country
for future
generations.*

March 31, 2016

Honorable Keith Gillespie
Republican Chairman
House Game and Fisheries Committee
4188 Lincoln Highway
York, PA 17406


Dear Keith,

This letter is written in support of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and a hunting license fee increase. The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) is responsible for managing Pennsylvania's wildlife and its habitat for future generations. The agency has many very dedicated, experienced and intelligent employees on its staff. Executive Director Matt Hough is a strong leader and has set a tone at the top in his tenure that is very productive and has permitted the developed of partnerships such as the one developed with the Keystone Elk Country Alliance. The Keystone Elk Country Alliance is a Pennsylvania based 501 (c) (3) wildlife conservation organization that operates and manages the Elk Country Visitor Center. Residents of our state should be proud and supportive of the good and important work of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. The Keystone Elk Country Alliance is in full support of the PGC's hunting license increase.

It has been 16 years since the Pennsylvania Game Commission received a hunting license increase. In recent years the PGC has been able to stave off a license fee increase through other revenue sources such as those from timber sales and Marcellus Shale Gas leases on state game lands. But more recently these revenue sources have dropped off significantly. Although the PGC can only request a license fee increase it becomes the Pennsylvania Legislature's responsibility to approve such fee increases. The PGC has projected that if a license fee increase is not received the agency's expenses will outweigh its revenue by more than \$34 million by 2019-2020. The increase is warranted so that services, positions and the high level of scientific wildlife management will not be cut. Eliminating positions and services is not a long term solution and will only reduce the high level of wildlife management residents have come to expect.

Although no one really wants to pay more; the enjoyment of hunting and outdoor recreation provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission is something KECA believes is worth the increased costs. KECA's mission; to conserve and enhance Pennsylvania's Elk Country for future generations is depended upon the PGC's ability to provide the high level of research and management of our state's wildlife resources. The Keystone Elk Country Alliance is in support of SB 1166 (PGC) and SB 1168 (PF&BC) in its current form. I ask that you support these Senate bills and that you work with the State House of Representatives, the Senate and across party lines to provide the legislation that is required so that our wildlife agencies can continue to provide the high level of wildlife management we have come to expect in our Keystone State. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Hope to see you in Elk Country,


Rawland D. Cogan, President & CEO
Keystone Elk Country Alliance



To: **Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Game and Fisheries**
501 North 3rd Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Re: **Senate Bills 1166 and 1168 - Relating to the Powers of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and Fish and Boat Commission**

Position: **Support**

Date: **April 7, 2016**

Members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Game and Fisheries:

I write today to express the strong support of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation for Senate Bills 1166 and 1168 (SB 1166 & SB 1168), legislation that would provide the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) the power to establish license and permit fees.

Through the American System of Conservation Funding, a "user-pays, public-benefits" program, Pennsylvania's sportsmen and women are the lifeblood of conservation funding for the two state agencies (PGC & PFBC) that are tasked with managing Pennsylvania's fish and wildlife resources and their habitat. Seventy-nine years ago, the hunting community initiated this System with the passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act) which directed excise taxes on firearms and ammunition to a dedicated fund to be used specifically for conservation purposes. Further, revenue from sportsmen's licenses was permanently linked to conservation through the establishment of this program, laying the foundation for what is now the American System of Conservation Funding. Through time, this System has expanded and now includes the fishing and boating communities with the passage of the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act (also known as the Dingell-Johnson Act, and the subsequent Wallop-Breaux Amendment) as well as the archery community.

The critical conservation dollars generated through this System fund a variety of efforts in Pennsylvania, including: enhanced fish and wildlife habitat and populations, recreational access to

public and private lands, shooting ranges and boat access facilities, wetlands protection and its associated water filtration and flood retention functions, and improved soil and water conservation. As such, all Pennsylvanian's benefit from this System, not just hunters and anglers.

The ability to price hunting and fishing licenses at an appropriate amount and to properly adjust for changing economic conditions is critical to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources and their habitat. In recent years, political roadblocks have, unfortunately, hindered the ability of hunting and fishing license fees to keep pace with inflation – hunting licenses fees have remained the same price since 1999, and fishing licenses since 2005.

Beyond ensuring that license fees keep pace with changing economic conditions, providing the state agencies the regulatory authority to adjust fees will allow them to more nimbly implement hunter and angler recruitment and retention programs to ensure that tomorrow's funders of state-level conservation are brought into the field and onto the water.

In closing, CSF supports granting authority to the PGC and PFBC to set license and permit fees through their rulemaking process, which will help to ensure that Pennsylvania's fish and wildlife populations continue to be managed by sound, science-based management for the benefit of all of Pennsylvania's citizens for generations to come. We urge a favorable vote for Senate Bills 1166 and 1168.

Sincerely,



Alana Barricks

Mid-Atlantic States Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
110 North Carolina Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20003

CC: Governor Tom Wolf
Robb Miller
Executive Director John Arway
Executive Director Matt Hough
Director Tim Schaeffer
Director Wayne Laroche

Kent A. Adams, East Region Director
Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever
993 Klinger Road
Millersburg, PA 17061
(717) 319-5575



To: Honorable Members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Game and Fisheries

501 North 3rd Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Re: Senate Bill 1166 - Relating to the Powers of the Pennsylvania Game Commission

Date: April 7, 2016

Members of the Pennsylvania House Committee on Game and Fisheries:

On behalf of Pheasants Forever's 13 chapters, 260 grassroots volunteers, and over 2,600 members in Pennsylvania, I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 1166 (SB 1166). This historic legislation would provide the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) the authority to set license and permit fees, the primary funding source of this self-funded agency. All Pennsylvanians benefit from the PGC's mission to manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals and their habitats for current and future generations. The conservation efforts of the PGC and its partners not only impact a few dozen game species but also hundreds of non-game species. Furthermore, the habitat conservation efforts for these species contribute to clean water, clean air, healthy forests and farms, and recreation for many Pennsylvanians and nonresidents alike.

Currently, the agency's ability to carry out their important mission is being crippled by budgetary shortfalls as a result of 17 years without a license increase. Wildlife and habitat conservation is too important to be subjected to long funding gaps and challenging political climates. In order to carry out the strategic, long-term plans that successful wildlife management requires, the PGC needs the ability to price hunting licenses appropriately and properly adjust for changing economic conditions, while keeping pace with inflation. SB 1166 would empower the PGC to make incremental funding adjustments over time, with relatively low financial impacts to hunters paying the fees. Additionally, providing the PGC with the regulatory authority to adjust fees will provide even more incentive and capability to implement innovative hunter recruitment and retention programs to ensure the future of conservation funding and perpetuate Pennsylvania's rich hunting heritage.

The unique model of North American conservation funding is based on user fees paid by sportsmen and women, an approach conceived and endorsed by hunters and anglers when the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (i.e. Pittman-Robertson Act) was passed in 1937. Through excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, Pittman-Robertson generates dedicated conservation funding and matches

Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunters inc.

Directors:

Roy Rosenbaum Richard Ross James Rogers Jay Roberts Ron Davis Ron Cole Chip Sorber

Richard J. Bednarczyk, 118 Commerce Dr., Scott Twp. PA 18447
President

David Hall, 2327 SR 29 South, Tunkhannock, PA 18657
Treasurer

Jerry Ross, 603 N. Wilbur Ave., Sayre, PA 18840
Vice-President

Kipp Adcock, RR#1, Box 1297 Center St Gouldsboro, PA 18424
Secretary

May 12, 2016

Senator Joseph B. Scarnati,

Dear Senator Scarnati,

As President of the Pennsylvania State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. inc., I represent approximately 270 residents of the Commonwealth who own, breed, raise and train high quality fox and coyote hounds.

I am writing to request that you support Senate Bill 1166 which would exempt funding for wildlife conservation from the political process and allow the Game Commission Board of Commissioners to set license fees. Passage of this bill would represent a historic milestone for wildlife conservation and the future of wildlife management in Pennsylvania.

SB 1166 was unanimously passed by the Senate Game and Fisheries committee on March 18th.

At our Annual Meeting, which was held on April 16th, our Board and our membership unanimously passed a resolution to support this bill. There were no dissenting votes among the 80 hunters present.

SB 1166 would allow the PGC to make small increases to license costs when increases were warranted. The current system for increasing the cost of a hunting license is cumbersome and subject to the political process. For this reason the cost of a hunting license has not increased since 1999, jeopardizing the PGC's ability to effectively manage the commonwealth's wildlife.

The current cost of a hunting license in Pennsylvania is the second lowest in the nation, followed only by Hawaii, which is not generally considered as a prime hunting destination.

As you know, hunting represents a key role in the fabric and character of this state.

The PA Game Commission must be provided with the proper resources to protect this heritage.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Bednarczyk
President
PA State Fox & Coyote Hunter's Assn. inc
118 Commerce Drive
Scott Township, PA 18447
(570) 586-9270
dick.bednarczyk@epix.net

To: Senator Pat Stefano
Re: Support for SB 1166

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) supports allowing the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to increase fees. WPC supports SB 1166, PN 1625 which would enable the Game Commission to set its fees at a level necessary to cover essential operating costs. WPC also supports SB 1168, PN 1653 allowing the Pennsylvania Fish Commission to set its own fees.

Since its founding in 1932, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has conserved more than 250,000 acres of land representing large tracts of intact forests and lands along numerous waterways of Western Pennsylvania. WPC has transferred approximately 45,000 acres to the PA Game Commission and has partnered with the PA Fish and Boat Commission on a variety of projects to protect or restore the water quality of our streams and rivers. These investments provided some of the most valued and well-used recreational opportunities in Pennsylvania. It is with this history that WPC supports SB 1166 and SB 1168.

It is essential that the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission have sufficient revenue to effectively carry out their conservation and wildlife protection responsibilities and to continue to be able to provide high quality outdoor recreational opportunities, generating far reaching economic benefits for our communities and the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Copy: Senator Eichelberger
Members of the PA Senate
Kim Sokoloski, Buchanan Ingersoll Rooney



Wildlands Conservancy

May 1, 2016

The Honorable Richard L. Alloway
Pennsylvania State Senate, District 33
37 South Main Street, Suite 200
Chambersburg, PA 17201

Re: Senate Bill No. 1166 -- Pennsylvania Game Commission License Increase Proposal

Dear State Senator Alloway,

On behalf of Wildlands Conservancy, I am writing today to ask for your support of Senate Bill No. 1166 Referred to as the License Increase Proposal. Wildlands Conservancy has been a long-time partner of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and we support the proposed license increases.

The Game Commission has managed Pennsylvania's wildlife resources for more than 120 years. Since 1913, when the State began selling hunting licenses to finance wildlife management, license revenue has been used to rebuild wildlife populations, protect wildlife through law enforcement, and assemble a 1.5 million-acre state game lands system to provide wildlife habitat and public hunting opportunities. The Game Commission currently manages 480 species of wild birds and mammals, most of which aren't hunted.

Wildlands Conservancy has worked in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission for the last 30+ years and has helped protect and transfer over 35,000 acres of land to them. License increases will help with many worthwhile projects and continue the Pennsylvania Game Commission's legacy of protecting and enhancing significant wildlife habitat throughout the State, which is complementary to our mission to protect and restore critical natural areas and waterways, and educate the community to create a legacy of a healthy, sustainable environment for future generations.

The Game Commission is facing overwhelming financial challenges. Hunting license fees account for almost 40 percent of the Game Commission's revenue. The fee for hunting and trapping licenses has not increased in 16 years. Without a license-fee increase, the agency will not be able to continue to provide the same level of service. Implications include:

- Major project and program cuts.
- Positions being eliminated or remaining vacant.
- Habitat projects being scaled back.
- Research projects being eliminated or scaled back.
- Elk range infrastructure projects on hold.
- Pymatuning Visitors Center rebuild project on hold.
- The agency's ability to maximize Federal Pittman-Robertson Grant Funds is being compromised because the agency can't provide matching funds.
- Additional land acquisition projects on hold.

The important projects and programs of the Pennsylvania Game Commission need to be continued and supported. In order to do so, I am asking that you please support the License Increase Proposal of the Pennsylvania Game Commission of Senate Bill No. 1166.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Kocher
President

✓ cc: Matt Hough – Pennsylvania Game Commission

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