



June 15, 2020

RE: House Bill 808, granting PFBC authority to set license and permit fees

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The undersigned organizations, representing tens of thousands of hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts across Pennsylvania, strongly support H.B. 808, which would grant the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) the authority to set license and permit fees as needed. This will better serve the sportsmen and outdoor recreation communities that depend on its services.

The PFBC is an independent state agency primarily funded by fishing license fees and boat registrations, and its mission is to “protect, enhance, and conserve” our Commonwealth’s 86,000 miles of rivers and streams and nearly 4,000 lakes. To fulfill this mission, the agency provides law enforcement and safety services, fish stocking, habitat restoration, and public access benefits to millions of citizens annually.

The PFBC does all of this without receiving revenue from the General Fund, and instead, the agency depends on user fees that have not been adjusted in 16 years. Currently, the PFBC

must rely on legislation for each user fee increase, this process has led to sudden and significant fee increases, resulting in declines in license and permit sales.

H.B. 808 upholds the General Assembly's oversight on proposed fee increases and provides the opportunity for robust public comment. The Senate and House Fish and Game Committees will maintain veto power over fee adjustments. The bill also includes a 3-year sunset provision and will expire July 15th, 2022, without reauthorization. If granted this authority, the PFBC has committed to only carrying out incremental increases that will support the agency's budget while holding down costs for anglers and boaters.

In addition to its other services, the PFBC plays a critical role in the conservation of our waterways. The agency assists with pollution enforcement, conducts conservation science, and restores fish and wildlife habitat. The Coldwater Heritage Partnership and the Unassessed Waters Initiative, collaborations with Trout Unlimited and other partners, are two notably successful programs that are restoring our best trout waters across the state.

PFBC provides the basic services and infrastructure that powers our state's \$26.9 billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy and that sportsmen and women depend on. A recent economic analysis by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership found there are nearly 1.3 million anglers and 780,000 hunters across the state. In 2016, sportsmen and women spent \$1.3 billion dollars in pursuit of their hunting and fishing passions. These activities supported over 20,000 jobs, which paid nearly \$800 million in salaries and wages and generated over \$300 million in local, state, and federal tax revenue.

The time has come to grant the PFBC the authority to establish its own fees, allowing this important agency to operate with a predictable budget and capacity. We urge you to work alongside your colleagues to pass H.B. 808 to allow the PFBC to better serve the outdoor recreation and sportsmen communities.

American Woodcock Society	Pheasants Forever
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers	Quail Forever
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation	Quality Deer Management Association
Ducks Unlimited	Ruffed Grouse Society
Fly Fishers International	Safari Club International
Isaac Walton League	Trout Unlimited
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen Conservationists	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Pennsylvania State Shotgunning Association	United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania