



July 22, 2022

**RE: Support for PFBC's proposed license and fee increase package.**

Dear PFBC Commissioners,

The undersigned organizations, representing tens of thousands of hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts across Pennsylvania, strongly support Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) authority, under Act 56 of 2020, 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 almost 15 years. Prior to Act 56, the PFBC had to rely on legislation for each user fee increase, this process had led to sudden and significant fee increases, resulting in declines in license and permit sales. That delay had caused staff cuts, postponed critical maintenance, and stretched safety services thin.

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. The current proposed increases will provide the Fish Fund with additional revenues of roughly \$2.5 million.

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 \$58 billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy. A recent update to an economic analysis by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership found there are nearly 1.3 million anglers and 780,000 hunters across the state. In 2020, sportsmen and women spent \$1.6 billion dollars in pursuit of their hunting and fishing passions. These activities supported over 30,000 jobs, which paid nearly \$1.4 billion in salaries and wages and generated over \$400 million in local, state, and federal tax revenue.

Act 56 granted PFBC the authority to establish its own fees, allowing this important agency to operate with a predictable budget and capacity. We write in support of the current proposed license and fee package to better serve the outdoor recreation and sportsmen communities.

Signed,

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
Congressional Sportsmen Federation  
Delta Waterfowl  
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trout Unlimited