



Dear Senator,

Sportsmen and women in Pennsylvania fully appreciate the urgency and need to address the Covid-19 coronavirus in our commonwealth. We are thankful for the extra time and work the legislature has put forth in the past several weeks to provide families and businesses proper health and economic relief.

However, the approved Amendment 05143 to House Bill 1822 is not an effective measure in this relief effort. This amendment specifically targets eight conservation funds, including the Environmental Stewardship Fund (Growing Greener) and Keystone Recreation, Park, And Conservation Fund (The Keystone Fund), freezing any new contracts and effectively restricting all new conservation projects from receiving much needed funding until the end of the Governor's emergency declaration.

Sportsmen and women across the Commonwealth rely on these funds for clean streams for fishing, healthy habitat for hunting, and a multitude of other outdoor recreation opportunities. Additionally, projects funded by these programs receive large private investments and non-government match, often to the tune of 3-1. At a time when more Pennsylvanians are turning to the outdoors and open spaces to improve their physical and mental health, now is not the time to cancel the future projects that provide these essential services to our citizens while leveraging partner match to relieve the burden on taxpayers.

Growing Greener, the Keystone Fund, and the remaining six special funds targeted in this legislation are investments in our Commonwealth's economy. The hundreds of projects receiving grants from these special funds appear in every corner of the state, employ thousands of people, and enable non-profit organizations and volunteers to contribute to project delivery. A single project may need the services of tree farms and plant nurseries, excavating crews, general contractors and require the purchase of building materials. In the dire economic times we face, special funds, and the projects they enable, provide a lifeline to the workers and businesses in our hardest hit communities.

These funds are also a boon to the state's \$26.9 billion outdoor economy which employs 390,000 Pennsylvanians. Guides, outfitters, outdoor retail stores, and a host of other tourism-based businesses all benefit from the completion of conservation projects funded through these programs.

By placing a freeze on new project spending for an undetermined amount of time, thousands of jobs will be lost, clean drinking water and flood mitigation efforts will go uncompleted, and shovel-ready projects to improve our quality of life will sit idle.

We recognize the path to recovery from this disease may be a long one, but hastily targeting critical conservation funding and stifling government programs that collaborate with non-profit organizations and the private sector is not the economic solution Pennsylvanian's need or deserve. We ask members of the State Senate to recognize the positive impact these funds and collaborative projects have in preserving the land and water Pennsylvanians enjoy and depend upon, especially in these difficult times, and support removal of amendment A05143 from HB 1822.

Signed,

American Sportfishing Association

Ducks Unlimited

Izaak Walton League of America

Quality Deer Management Association

Pennsylvania Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited

Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists

Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever

Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Trout Unlimited