

September 27, 2021

Dear Representative,

The undersigned park and forest friends' groups, recreation, park, trail, hiking, conservation and other organizations from across Pennsylvania urge you to support House Bill 1694. This bipartisan bill will provide common sense limited liability protection for volunteers and volunteer organizations who perform countless thousands of service hours that enhance and improve parks, trails and other public lands and facilities across the Commonwealth.

House Bill 1694 was developed and introduced by Representatives James Struzzi, Michael Driscoll, Martina White, and Perry Warren. The bill is now in the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee.

Meritless lawsuits are being filed against friends' groups and other volunteers and volunteer organizations because of their mere affiliation with a trail or park, not because of any negligent action on the part of these individuals or organizations.

For example, the Friends of Pennypack in Philadelphia were sued twice for accidents that had nothing to do with their work on trails. As a result of these baseless suits, the insurer of the group withdrew its insurance coverage and the Friends of Pennypack were forced to disband.

This type of litigation forces friends' groups and other volunteer organizations across the Commonwealth to bear the costs of rapidly rising liability insurance, diverting much needed funds away from projects that benefit all.

Volunteers and volunteer organizations perform extraordinarily valuable services such as keeping hiking trails open and maintained, cleaning up litter, performing maintenance and completing projects in parks, and making our public lands and facilities safer, accessible and enjoyable. Volunteers freely give of their time to make their communities a better place.

Please support House Bill 1694, which will enhance our ability to undertake this valuable work across Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Marci Mowery, President
Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, Camp Hill

Tim Herd, CEO
Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, State College

John Detisch, President
Pennsylvania Division of the Izaak Walton League of America

Katie Barker, President
Keystone Trails Association, Mechanicsburg

Torin Miller, Director of Policy
National Deer Association, Bellefonte

Rusty Baker, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Museums, Harrisburg

Lowell Graybill, President
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists, Harrisburg

Mindy Gulden Crawford, Executive Director
Preservation Pennsylvania, Harrisburg

Greg Malaska, President
Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, Jim Thorpe

Andy Loza, Executive Director
WeConservePA, Harrisburg

Dan Kostella, Board Member
Armstrong Trails, Kittanning

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Friends of Beltzville State Park, Lehighton

Karen Rosenberger, Chairperson
Friends of Buchanan State Forest, Clearville

Mary Normandia, Member
Bucks County Audubon, Doylestown

Barbara Stollsteimer, Treasurer
Bucks County Birders, Doylestown

Joyce Appel, Member
Butler Outdoor Club, Butler

Karen Moose, President
Friends of Caledonia State Park, Fayetteville

Brendan Black, President
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Capitolo Community Garden, Philadelphia

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Chasing Trail, Philadelphia

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Cherry Springs Dark Sky Fund, Galeton

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Birding Club of Delaware County, Media

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Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, Philadelphia

Michelle Feldman, Executive Director
East Falls Development Corporation, Philadelphia

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Friends of Exton Park, Exton

Maura McCarthy, Ph.D., Executive Director
Fairmount Park Conservancy, Philadelphia

Jessamyn Melnicoff, Treasurer
Friends of Fernhill Park, Philadelphia

Catherine Nino, Member
Friends of Fitler Square, Philadelphia

Nancy Geryk, President
Garden Court Community Garden, Philadelphia

Terry Christopher, Chairman
Friends of Gifford Pinchot State Park, Rossville

Rudolph Troples, Chair
Friends of Goddard State Park, Sandy Lake

Bryan Perry Executive Director
Great Allegheny Passage Conservancy, Homestead

Pat Sweeney, Member
Friends of Hart Park, Philadelphia

Michael, Pirrello, Organizer
Hatfield Environmental Action Together, Hatfield

Joseph Tierney, Steward
Lackawanna State Park Trail Care Crew, North Abingdon Township

Lauren Koker, Executive Director
Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor, Latrobe

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Friends of Lyman Run State Park, Galeton

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The Mason-Dixon Trail System, Wrightsville

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Friends of the Matthias Baldwin Park, Philadelphia

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Friends of Michaux State Forest, Fayetteville

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Mid State Trail Association, Huntingdon

Zane Barger, President
Moraine, McConnells Mill and Jennings Commission, Portersville

Calvin Baxter, Chairman
Friends of Mt. Pisgah State Park, Troy

Mike Quinn, Chairperson
Friends of Nockamixon State Park, Quakertown

Margaret Sims, Chair
Friends of Oil Creek State Park, Oil City

Paulette Rodriguez
Former Friends of Pennypack Park, Philadelphia

Henry D'Alessandro, President
Pennypack Valley Bird Club, Philadelphia

Heidi Grunwald, President
Friends of Philly Pumptrack, Philadelphia

Bethany Teigen, Founder
Philadelphia Mycological Club

Bernard Brown, Member
Philly Nature

Alex Doty, Executive Director
Philadelphia Parks Alliance

Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner
Parks and Recreation Department, City of Philadelphia

Andre Weltman, Chairman
Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park, Gardners

Stephen Beals, Chairman
Friends of Prince Gallitzin State Park, Patton

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Friends of Ridley Creek State Park, Media

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Rev. Jacqueline Capers
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Friends of Washington Avenue Green, Philadelphia

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Kenneth Sherwood, Chair
Friends of Yellow Creek State Park, Penn Run