



TO: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

RE: Opposition to HB1300 Amendment related to reallocating Game Fund dollars.

Dear Representatives:

We, the undersigned organizations, representing the interests of hundreds of thousands of hunters, anglers, other conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts across Pennsylvania, are writing to express our concerns regarding HB 1300, in particular the amendment taking \$150,000,000 from the Game Fund, money earmarked for wildlife and habitat and Pennsylvania Game Commission administration, and diverting it to the Clean Streams Fund.

This unprecedented action goes against the compact made between the Commonwealth and the nearly 1 million hunters who annually purchase licenses and expect those fees to be part of the fund; and sets an alarming precedent for future legislative sessions.

The Game Commission functions without the benefit of tax dollars or general funds. The revenue from oil and gas extraction on state game lands that is being targeted played a critical role to strengthen the Pennsylvania Game Fund while the revenue from license sales and other sources have been stagnant. However, this relatively new revenue source is highly unpredictable. Continued removals would hinder the Commission's ability to fulfill its mission.

While the Clean Streams Fund continues to enhance Pennsylvania's water quality and fisheries, the diversion of \$150,000,000 from the Game Fund as proposed in HB 1300 will undermine the Game Commission's ability to manage wildlife and habitat, and the model of conservation funding that hunters have supported for generations.

There is also a deep concern that this diversion from the Game Fund will render Pennsylvania ineligible to receive future Pittman-Robertson federal funding.

As you may already know, Pittman-Robertson funds are derived from an excise tax on hunting and shooting equipment. These funds are collected by the Federal Government and dispersed to the states as matching grant money to state wildlife agencies. In 2023 Pennsylvania received **\$41,067,392** in funding from this program. Mainly due to the large number of hunters in Pennsylvania, it ranks third among all fifty states in the amount of funds received each year. Funds derived from an excise tax that those same hunters proudly pay to support the North American Model of Conservation.

Eligibility for these funds is dependent on revenue derived from hunting and fishing licenses (including funds from assets previously purchased with said revenue such as leases on Game Lands) being controlled by the agency and only used for administration of the State fish and wildlife agency, which includes only the functions required to manage the agency and the fish- and wildlife-related resources for which the agency has authority under State law. Any diversion of these funds will likely render the state ineligible to receive federal funds through Pittman-Robertson (Sections 80.10, 80.11, 80.20 of the Federal code).

For these reasons we ask that HB 1300 not pass with the aforementioned amendment.

Signed,
American Sportfishing Association
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Congressional Sportsmen Federation
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Hunters for Sunday Hunting
National Deer Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists
Pheasants Forever/ Quail Forever
Ruffed Grouse Society
SCI: First for Hunters
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Trout Unlimited

CC:

Pennsylvania Senate
Governor Joshua Shapiro