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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 124 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY HOWARD, BOBACK, SAPPEY, SCHLOSSBERG, SAMUELSON,  
SANCHEZ, HOHENSTEIN AND DELLOSO, JULY 30, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON GAME AND FISHERIES, JULY 30, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to conduct a  
2 study on the current status of bat species located in this  
3 Commonwealth and management and conservation efforts that  
4 have been undertaken to protect and bolster bat populations  
5 and to issue a report of its findings and recommendations to  
6 the General Assembly.

7 WHEREAS, Although some mammals are able to glide, bats are  
8 the only mammals that are truly able to fly; and

9 WHEREAS, Bats are so unique that they belong to their own  
10 order of mammals known as Chiroptera, meaning "hand-winged"; and

11 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth is home to nine different species  
12 of bats, all of which feed on insects; and

13 WHEREAS, Bats can consume 25% of their body weight during a  
14 single feeding; and

15 WHEREAS, According to the United States Fish and Wildlife  
16 Service, a typical colony of 100 bats feeding for roughly 200  
17 days has been estimated to consume more than 2,220 pounds, or  
18 approximately 600 million insects; and

19 WHEREAS, Though the large-scale ecological importance of bats  
20 may not be readily apparent, the United States Geological Survey

1 estimates that bats save the agricultural industry billions of  
2 dollars annually through the consumption of harmful insects; and

3 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has experienced a significant  
4 decline in populations of certain bat species in recent years  
5 due to the disease known as white-nose syndrome; and

6 WHEREAS, White-nose syndrome is a disease caused by the  
7 fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*; and

8 WHEREAS, White-nose syndrome was named because the infection  
9 associated with it is white in color and develops on the muzzle  
10 and wing membranes of infected bats; and

11 WHEREAS, Once infected, bats begin exhibiting  
12 uncharacteristic behaviors, such as leaving their hibernation  
13 sites during winter months, flying outside during daylight hours  
14 and clustering near the entrances of the caves during their  
15 hibernating period; and

16 WHEREAS, These behaviors burn stored fat reserves needed to  
17 sustain hibernation through winter months and lead to fatigue in  
18 bats that is ultimately fatal; and

19 WHEREAS, Since it was first discovered in this Commonwealth  
20 in 2008, white-nose syndrome has been confirmed in several  
21 counties located across this Commonwealth; and

22 WHEREAS, According to studies conducted by the Pennsylvania  
23 Game Commission, there has been an estimated 99% decrease in the  
24 eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*), little brown bat  
25 (*Myotis lucifugus*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis*  
26 *septentrionalis*) and tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)  
27 populations; and

28 WHEREAS, It is vital that this Commonwealth recognize the  
29 importance of bats and develop measures to conserve and protect  
30 these species; and

1       WHEREAS, A study that identifies and evaluates bat  
2 populations in this Commonwealth and related conservation  
3 efforts would be beneficial to both humans and wildlife;  
4 therefore be it

5       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the Joint  
6 State Government Commission to conduct a study on the current  
7 status of bat species located in this Commonwealth and  
8 management and conservation efforts that have been undertaken to  
9 protect and bolster bat populations and to issue a report of its  
10 findings and recommendations to the General Assembly; and be it  
11 further

12       RESOLVED, That the study:

13           (1) identify and examine conservation efforts and  
14 procedures, measures, statutes and management  
15 responsibilities of State agencies, nongovernmental  
16 organizations and academic institutions to assist in the  
17 management and protection of bat species in this  
18 Commonwealth;

19           (2) conduct an economic impact analysis on the loss of  
20 bat populations relative to insect mitigation efforts and the  
21 impact on the spread of vector-borne diseases in this  
22 Commonwealth;

23           (3) identify best practices in response to white-nose  
24 syndrome mitigation and bat-related conservation efforts,  
25 with consideration given to public-private partnerships,  
26 academic institutions and interagency coordination; and

27           (4) identify financial mechanisms and options for  
28 funding white-nose syndrome mitigation and bat-related  
29 conservation efforts;

30 and be it further

1       RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission consult  
2 with organizations that:

3           (1) have organizational missions and expertise in  
4 wildlife habitat and ecological conservation relative to bat  
5 species;

6           (2) integrate conservation efforts in a way that  
7 strengthens and inspires community involvement;

8           (3) collect data on the ecological benefits of bats;

9           (4) collect data on bat habitats, mortality, populations  
10 and white-nose syndrome; and

11          (5) have knowledge of relevant issues;

12 and be it further

13       RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission be  
14 authorized to consult with surrounding states and private  
15 landowners that have knowledge of relevant issues; and be it  
16 further

17       RESOLVED, That the Joint State Government Commission prepare  
18 a report of its findings and recommendations of the study and  
19 submit the report to the General Assembly no later than 18  
20 months after the adoption of this resolution.