



Shooting Straight for April 7, 2016 Better Bowhunting

Testimony of the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

To

Game & Fisheries Committee, PA House of Representatives

Chairman Gillespie, Chairman Harhai, Members of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, my name is Wes Waldron and I represent the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania. The UBP was founded in 1985 and has adopted a mission statement that is solidly based upon the support of the wise management of our wildlife and habitat resources utilizing scientific and biologically sound management precepts. We currently have approximately 2800 members bolstered by 52 supporting sportsmen's clubs, and 32 business sponsors. In addition the UBP is a voting member organization of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsman's Clubs. Our organization makes every effort to represent the best interests of Pennsylvania bow hunters while at the same time promoting and protecting the sport of bow hunting.

The UBP considers funding for the Pennsylvania Game Commission to be an issue of the greatest priority, especially when considering that this agency is responsible for the perpetuation and protection of the game and non-game species of the Commonwealth. We are quite cognizant of the fact that the PGC far too frequently suffers from lack of revenue, and that legislation necessary to remedy that situation is in itself far too *infrequent*. While insufficient revenue is generally thought only to affect the agency, in truth it affects almost every citizen of Pennsylvania.

Lack of revenue affects every facet of our state wildlife agency, in staff, manpower, educational outreach, infrastructure, wildlife management and law enforcement; and this eventually results in a loss or reduction of services for not only license buyers, but non-license buyers as well. The UBP has always supported a fully functional agency un-constricted by a lack of revenue, and we have defended increases to license and permit fees even when the cost of the archery license topped the list of increase percentages. The UBP has also supported the concept of supplemental funding for both the PGC and PA Fish & Boat Commission, such as that provided by several other states that earmark a percentage of their state sales tax for their state wildlife agencies.

Not long ago, a bill was introduced in the Legislature that would have created a "tipping fee" to be paid by out-of-state waste haulers dumping in Pennsylvania landfills. Portions of that revenue were to be directed to the PGC and the PF&BC, amongst others. Unfortunately that piece of legislation barely left the starting gate, and once again the specter of a revenue crisis for both agencies crept upon the horizon. As a sportsmen's organization supportive of our game and fish agencies, as well as supportive of those agencies having sufficient funds to properly and effectively fulfill their individual mandates, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania are of the opinion that the General Assembly is and well should be, on the threshold of ensuring that the Commonwealths game and fish agencies will see an end to underfunding.





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With the introduction of, and first passing of Senate Bill 1166 that would give the PGC the power to set their own license and permit fees, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania applaud the bi-partisanship of the Senate Game & Fisheries Committee regarding this piece of legislation. We trust that the Senate will act quickly and provide full approval of this bill and that this Committee, and the House of Representative, will act in kind when SB 1166 arrives on their table.

Despite the initial grouching, grumbling, and lamentations that accompany every hunting license increase, those reactions differ little from those heard in the wake of increases to the cost of other recreational endeavors, or food, fuel, and modes and methods of transportation. In our opinion, hunters and non-hunters alike should eventually recognize the advantages of continuing PGC services without the predictable reductions and losses of service that increased costs and diminishing revenue always bring about. We doubt that anyone will miss the prolonged wait for license increase legislation to be drafted, introduced, cussed and discussed, tabled, re-introduced, and who knows for how long. All of that while the coffers of the PGC continue to dwindle to levels that only an exorbitant increase could hope to address for the long-term. Current legislation that would address the PGC's financial needs are the first since 1999, a sixteen year period that the UBP and many others find incomprehensible given the responsibility that the Agency has to our wildlife resources, and the sportsmen and women of Pennsylvania

Although the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania are fully supportive of allowing the Pennsylvania Game Commission to set their own fees, we also believe that the PGC cannot hope to continue to obtain sufficient funding through license fees alone. At some point the cost of license and permit fees will fail to provide the Agency with the majority of revenue required to maintain infrastructure, and fulfill their mandate, and in our organizations opinion we are at that point already. The Agency needs a dependable source of funding or the cost of licenses and permits will indeed become unaffordable for some.

The answer to the issue of supplemental funding for both our fish and game agencies lies directly in the hands of the General Assembly, and while there are more than several options it is ultimately their decision as to where that funding may be secured. The question here is two-fold, can that funding be found, and is there a desire to see our fish and wildlife agencies provided with sufficient sustainable revenue to effectively manage the species they are charged with? The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania feel that the answer to both questions should be a resounding, YES!

Respectfully,

S. Wesley Waldron, Chairman, Legislative Committee

United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania

Rick Conley, President





Shooting Straight for Better Bowhunting

March 17, 2016

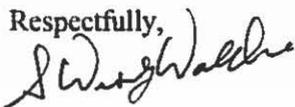
Gregory L. Raffensperger, Executive Director
Game & Fisheries Committee (R)
House of Representatives
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3040

Executive Director Raffensperger,

The United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania (UBP) have always based our support of the management of Pennsylvania's wildlife and wildlife habitat resources on the best scientific and biological practices. In that regard we feel that the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has, and continues to, follow those precepts in the management of both game and non-game species, as well as the natural environment necessary to their survival and well-being.

The UBP strongly feels that those efforts are often hampered by a shortage of revenue and that periodic increases in revenue are necessary in order for that agency to properly and effectively address their mandate. Our organization recognizes that it has been sixteen years since the General Assembly has approved an increase for the PGC, in our opinion, far too long.

Therefore, we wish the Members of the House Game and Fisheries to know that the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania fully support a license increase package for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In addition, the United Bowhunters of Pennsylvania could also very easily support legislation that would empower the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, to set their own fee's for licenses and permits.

Respectfully,


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