



## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

# FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 889

PRINTERS NO. 1519

PRIME SPONSOR: Baker

### COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2016/17	FY 2017/18
General Fund	\$0	\$0
Game Fund	See fiscal impact	See fiscal impact
Fish Fund	See fiscal impact	See fiscal impact

**SUMMARY:** Includes enforcement officers and investigators of both the PA Game Commission (PGC) and PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) under the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law, also known as the Heart and Lung Act.

**ANALYSIS:** SB 889 adds Wildlife Conservation Officers and Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) to Act 193 of 1935, the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law (EODBL, aka Heart and Lung Act), making them eligible to receive temporary salary, medical and hospital expenses if injured or contract certain diseases while performing official duties.

WCOs will receive their full rate of salary from the Commonwealth, as fixed by ordinance or resolution, until the disability has ceased. All medical and hospital bills incurred in connection with any such injury shall be paid by the Commonwealth.

Any workmen's compensation received or collected by any such employee shall be turned over to the Commonwealth and paid into the Treasury. Any such payment that is not paid to the Commonwealth shall be deducted from any salary then or thereafter becoming due to the employee.

Any WCO who has served for four consecutive years or longer who suffers from diseases of the heart and tuberculosis of the respiratory system and caused by extreme overexertion in times of stress or danger or by exposure to heat, smoke, fumes or gases arising directly out of the employment shall be covered, except if any such disability is compensable under the compensation laws as having been caused by accidental injury.

All payments required to be made by the Commonwealth on account of any WCO shall be made from monies appropriated to the PGC, PFBC, or exclusively authorized from the Game Fund or Fish Fund, depending on which agency employs the individual.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** If this legislation is enacted, the exact cost to the PGC and the PFBC cannot be determined at this time because it is unknown how many WCOs would suffer an injury or contract certain diseases while performing their official duties. However, according to the Governor's Office of Administration, over the last five years the PGC reported 204 injuries, paying \$429,788 in workmen's compensation benefits and the PFBC reported 54 injuries, paying \$21,721 in workmen's compensation benefits. Based on the number of reported injuries and the fact that the workmen's compensation benefit is equal to two-thirds of an employee's salary, the enactment of this legislation on average could cost the Game Fund approximately \$43,000 annually and the Fish Fund approximately \$2,200 annually. The reported injuries over the last five years include all PGC and PFBC staff and not just the enforcement officers and investigators that would be covered under this legislation. Additionally, there may be administrative, health and legal costs to the commissions related to the Heart and Lung Act that are not accounted for in the estimates above.

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House Appropriations Committee (R)

**DATE:** October 18, 2016

*Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*