

Testimony to the House Finance Committee on House Bill 1676

April 29, 2008

J. Gary Moore, Legislative Liaison for Dr. Douglas J. Austen, Executive Director

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

Good morning Chairman Levdansky and members of the Finance Committee of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. My name is Gary Moore and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. I am here on behalf of Dr. Douglas Austen, the agency's Executive Director, to present testimony in support of HB-1676. Dr. Austen is unable to be with us due to a long standing prior commitment.

The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, an independent state agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities. Specifically, the legislative charge includes the promotion of sport fishing, fisheries management, recreational boating and boating safety. Agency funding is highly dependent upon the sale of fishing licenses and permits, boat registrations and titles. A separate fish fund and a separate boat fund are managed by this agency with little or no annual allotment from the Commonwealth's general fund.

Fishing supports more than 14,600 jobs in Pennsylvania. The amount of state income tax and state sales tax paid to the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue exceeds \$53M annually. This very popular outdoor recreational activity is "big business" and provides an economic benefit of \$1.6B to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Funding is one of the top challenges for each and every director and manager of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Today, the financial health of the Commission is good but projections for fiscal year 2012 – 2013 indicate that the balances in the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund will be insufficient to meet the needs of our current programs. Fees for fishing licenses, permits and boat registrations were last increased in 2005.

Relatively large fee increases have typically occurred every 6 - 10 years which has immediately caused a reduction in the number of licenses sold. For example, in 2005 the cost of an annual resident license was increased by 29% and an 8.5% decline in sales was experienced that same year. This cyclical pattern results in a detrimental loss in the number fishing licenses and permits purchased.

Anglers and boaters provide funding for several programs that benefit all citizens of this Commonwealth but are not exactly a direct benefit to fishing and boating. These diverse responsibilities have been an integral part of the Commission for decades. Environmental permit application reviews, the development of environmental education and water safety awareness

Pennsylvania

1.4 million hunters & anglers spending \$9.6 million a day



TOTAL SPENDING \$3.5 billion

Casting
benefits
throughout
the economy.

- Sportsmen support more jobs in Pennsylvania than Penn State University and the Philadelphia Airport combined (51,000 jobs vs. 45,000).
- Annual spending by Pennsylvania sportsmen is more than the revenues of York-based BonTon Stores (\$3.5 billion vs. \$3.1 billion).
- Annual spending by Pennsylvania sportsmen is more than the cash receipts from dairy products, cattle, greenhouse/nursery, mushrooms and broilers - the state's top five grossing agricultural commodities (\$3.5 billion vs. \$3.1 billion).
- Pennsylvania sportsmen spend \$104 million annually on outboard boats and engines to get out on the water and around the rivers for fishing and hunting.
- Pennsylvania sportsmen outnumber the combined populations of Allentown, Erie, Pittsburgh, Reading, and Scranton, two to one (1.4 million vs. 680,297).

Lots of bang. Even more bucks.

Jobs	51,000
Salaries and wages	\$1.7 billion
Federal Taxes	\$411 million
State and Local Taxes	\$371 million
Ripple Effect	\$5.5 billion



CSF and NASC are the most respected and trusted hunting and fishing organizations in the political arena. With support from every major hunting and fishing organization, we are the leader in promoting sportsmen's issues with elected officials. CSF works directly with the bi-partisan Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus in the U.S. Congress; NASC works with affiliated state sportsmen's caucuses in state legislatures around the country.

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation 202-543-6850 www.sportsmenslink.org

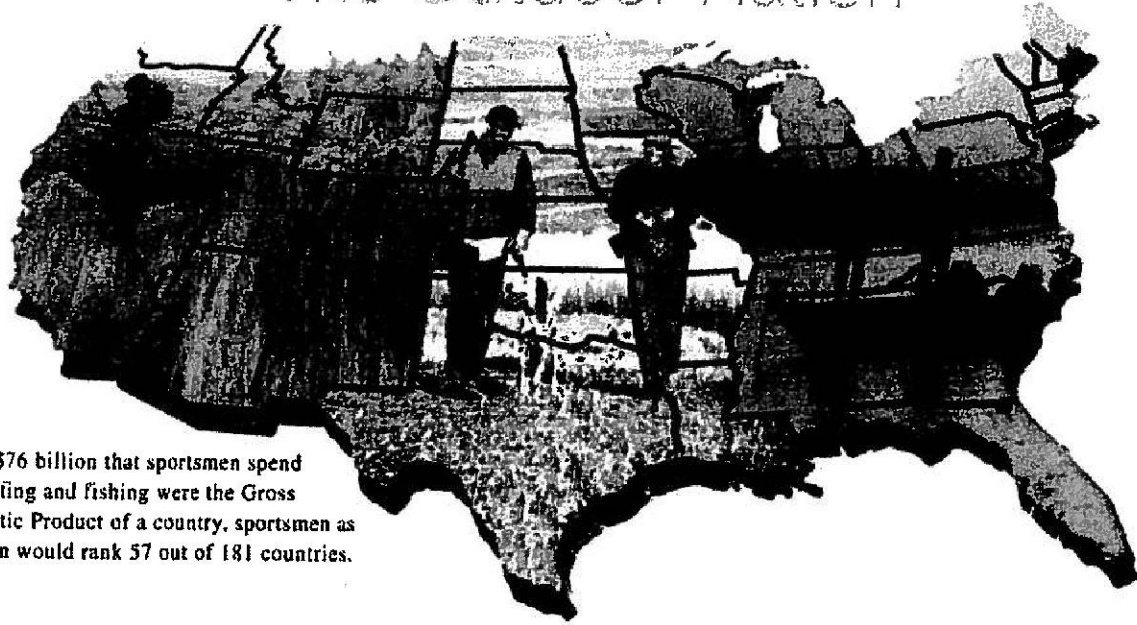
In partnership with



National Marine Manufacturers Association



The Outdoor Nation



If the \$76 billion that sportsmen spend on hunting and fishing were the Gross Domestic Product of a country, sportsmen as a nation would rank 57 out of 181 countries.

PARTICIPATION	SPENDING	JOBS	SALARIES/WAGES	FEDERAL STATE & LOCAL TAXES
Sportsmen 34 million	\$76 billion	1.6 million	\$60 billion	\$25.6 billion
Anglers 30 million	\$42 billion	1 million	\$39 million	\$16.4 billion
Hunters 12.5 million	\$23 billion	600,000	\$21 billion	\$9.2 billion

Every single state makes a contribution through revenue, taxes, and jobs. Here are the facts on Pennsylvania's anglers and hunters.

PARTICIPATION	RANK	SPENDING	RANK
Resident sportsmen	1.4 million # 5	Sportsmen	\$3.5 billion # 4
Resident anglers	830,000 # 12	Fishing	\$1.8 billion # 6
Resident hunters	933,000 # 2	Hunting	\$1.7 billion # 2
Out of state hunters	111,000 # 4	JOBS	RANK
Out of state anglers	164,000 # 17	Sportsmen	51,000 # 6
Days afield	16 million # 1	Fishing	23,000 # 8
Days on the water	17.1 million # 6	Hunting	28,000 # 2



The majority of all sportsmen consider themselves "likely voters" and 8 in 10 say that a candidate's position on sportsmen's issues is important in determining for whom they will vote.

If all hunters and anglers living in Pennsylvania voted in the 2004 presidential election, they would have equaled 38% of the entire vote.

1 out of 7 residents hunt or fish.

www.sportsmenslink.org

*A respondent who is both a hunter and an angler is counted in each category, but only once for total participation numbers.

**Money spent on an item for both hunting and fishing is only counted for in the total spending category.

***Sample size too small to be reliable.

Statistics come from the U.S.F.W.S. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, Southwick and Associates, American Sportfishing Association, and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. For further information, contact CSF at 202-543-6850.

programs, the training of emergency personnel in water/ice rescue, the conducting of non-game studies and the management of reptiles, amphibians and mollusks are some examples. The Commission annually expends in excess of \$5M on these very important programs that connect children with the outdoors, assist in watershed management, monitor environmental issues, manage non-game species, prevent accidents and save lives.

Synopsis of Related Expenses

Permit application reviews (environmental and threatened and endangered species)	\$2M
Non-game conservation	\$1M
Invasive species	\$25,000
3 Rivers Ecological Research Center	\$300,000
Habitat enhancement and dam removal	\$750,000
Inspection and enforcement of low-head dams	\$20,000
Aquatic resource education	\$742,000
Water safety and rescue training	\$250,000

Should HB-1676 pass the General Assembly and be signed into law by the Governor, a stable long-term funding source will have been identified to allow for some program expansion and to offset the escalating operational costs. The states of Missouri and Arkansas currently enjoy a funding stream where a portion of the state sales tax is dedicated to fish and wildlife programs in addition to funds received through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses

With a supplemental funding source, future fishing license and permit increases may exceed 10 or more years in duration and the dollar amount may be at a much lower average percentage than the past three increases. A fishing license would actually become a better bargain in future years than it is today. Everyone knows that a fishing license has always offered a great deal of opportunity, pleasure and excitement for the money.

Thank you for this opportunity to deliver testimony about HB-1676 before the House Finance Committee. This concludes my testimony and at this time I would be happy to address any questions.