

December 8, 2011

Subject: Public Hearing of The House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee regarding House Bill 137, Post Labor Day School Opening Date.

Good morning Representatives, my name is Andrew Quinn. I am the Director of Community Relations for Kennywood Park in West Mifflin PA. Kennywood is owned by the Palace Entertainment Company of Newport Beach CA, which owns and operates a total of 40 Parks and Attractions in 10 different states including 4 here in Pennsylvania. Kennywood in West Mifflin, Idlewild and Soak Zone in Ligonier, Sandcastle in West Homestead and Dutch Wonderland in Lancaster PA.

I also serve as the Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the *Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association*, on whose behalf I am testifying today.

Currently in the State of Pennsylvania there are 18 amusement/waterparks in operation, which is more than any other state in the Union. 10 of those 18 parks have been operating for 100 years or more. Most were started as trolley or train parks, back before the turn of the 20th Century, and have been well maintained and upgraded during their long history.

Below are the 2011 employment figures for our member Parks:

College Students	5156
High School Students	6848
Non Students or Adults	4195
Teachers	<u>385</u>
Total Seasonal Employment	16,584
Total Fulltime Employment	902

In our relatively short operating season of about 130 days, we entertain more than 12 Million visitors collectively across the State.

As you can see, this is just our industry. When added to other summer industries such as campgrounds, fairs/carnivals, summer camps, swimming pools, golf courses and summer vacation resorts and their related industries and suppliers, these figures grow dramatically.

Our concern today deals with the opening of schools in Pennsylvania prior to the Labor Day holiday - the traditional end of summer vacation.

Let me first state that the *Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association* wholeheartedly agrees with and supports the idea that students in Pennsylvania schools should have the best and most complete education that can be provided for them.

The *Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association* believes that a summer job is not just an "earning" experience. It is also a "learning" experience. Over the long history of our member parks, we have provided hundreds of thousands of students with their first job. We feel that there is more to the educational process in America than just attending school in the "traditional" way. The experience of a summer job provides students with several educational opportunities such as showing them responsibilities involved in making a living, broadening their perspective of a working relationship with other people, and giving them the opportunity to sort out potential career interests. Of course, the "earning" experience provides many with the means to go on to higher education.

When schools open prior to Labor Day, the result is a loss of revenue and a decrease in the number of available employees for many seasonal tourist businesses.

The state spends a great deal of advertising dollars inviting people into Pennsylvania only to have those people visit, during the last two weeks of August, and find many attractions have closed before the Labor Day holiday due to lack of employees.

In the week prior to Labor Day, half of our member parks close completely and the other half have a dramatically limited operating schedule. The estimated loss in attendance on those days for our members is about 500,000 visitors.

The loss of revenue, wages, and tax dollars throughout the entire summer leisure industry during the last two weeks of August is in the millions of dollars.

The *Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association* is in favor of legislation that would require schools in the Commonwealth to open after the Labor Day holiday.

Thank you for allowing me to share our views on this matter. Your committee's time and attention are greatly appreciated.