

Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania



"The largest statewide individual membership sporting advocacy organization in the Commonwealth"

Conservation supported through thousands of voices for hunting, fishing, trapping and our second amendment gun rights.

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HB 2083 TESTIMONY

Legislators,

Pennsylvania is different from the rest of the nation continuing to have separate agencies to manage mammals/game and fish/reptiles. The concept is a good one, and until about 20 years ago served our residents and sportsmen fairly well. In recent decades we have seen dissension and separation between hunters/trappers, and our game management agency (The Pennsylvania Game Commission).... whom may I add is funded almost entirely by those sportsmen. This divisiveness was no accident, and was basically the result of the agency losing sight and commitment to its mission. Bio-diversity concerns, idea-logs and foresters became far too imbedded and influential effecting management of this agency, and the result has taken us far off course in these past two decades. The "sister" department DCNR, also now reveals thru their actions to be minimally concerned for hunters and habitat needed to maintain the sport of hunting.

Liars can figure but figures don't lie and a review of continued declining hunting license sales reinforces there is something wrong. Please do not accept the argument that this decline is in line with a national trend. Our separated agency structure is one that had the capability to not let us track any national decline, by keeping focused on the management of game, the focus has long been blurred.

Changes to hunting season structures and lengths, were implemented without consideration of social, economic or sporting impacts, and advanced forward without sportsmen request, societal approval or input.

Legislators from northern tier rural counties saw a deer management philosophy cripple their small town economies to a point it negatively affected tax base issues as well as closed many small businesses. Many large statewide sporting groups have been trying tirelessly to bring attention and remediation to what has been done. The entire focus of deer management in particular was seen only thru rose colored glasses of biological determinations.

As a former member of Governor Corbett's Advisory Council for Hunting, Fishing and conservation, I was able to see first-hand testimonials from DCNR representatives that revealed their almost complete disregard for the sport of hunting, which previously was the largest economic driver by far in the 11 county Pa. Wilds area. I can give specifics to this claim if you so choose to contact me, this testimony would double in length if I identified what transpired in the written word. Public land habitat improvement which benefits game and non-game species alike is being ignored by DCNR and the proof is revealed in their initiatives to radically expand old growth forests that have the least benefit to wildlife. HB2083 is the tool to bring correct thinking back to our forestry management.

HB 2083 TESTIMONY

Some claim HB2083 implements too much legislative input in the choice of the advisory panel identified. As an individual that went thru the PGC commissioner selection process and ended up a finalist, there is no more political process than that one. It starts with an approval letter from your local senator, interview in front of a selected governor's advisory council, interviews with the secretary of DCNR and the office of public liaison. Countless hours in Harrisburg meeting with legislators because even if chosen by the governor, although somewhat different today, back then it took 2/3 senate majority vote for approval. HB2083 implements a process bringing deer and habitat back in balance, righting a badly listing (PGC) ship.

The other static concerns within HB2083 surrounding deer management parameters, are little more than reverting back to what worked before biological ineptitude and elitism steamrolled our great deer program. To improve our state's hunting, habitat, wildlife, rural economics and to stop the digression of our sporting community please support HB2083.

Thank You!
Randy Santuccci
Board Chairman of The Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania