

2 October 2023

PA House ERE Committee Hearing

HB1275 (2023)

Trout Unlimited Remarks

Presented by Emily Baldauff, Mid Atlantic Policy Program Manager for Trout Unlimited National

Good morning, my name is Emily Baldauff. I am the Mid Atlantic Policy Program Manager for National Trout Unlimited. I represent the interests of 15,000 TU members comprised of anglers, conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts across the Commonwealth. I am here today to express Trout Unlimited's support for HB 1275 to provide for protection of existing riparian buffers, for restoration of impaired riparian buffers, for exemptions, for municipal authority, for powers and duties of Department of Environmental Protection, for property inspections, for delegation to a municipality, for municipal action appeals, for penalties, civil action, and liability for costs and for effect on other Commonwealth laws or regulations and municipal ordinances.

As the largest coldwater conservation organization in Pennsylvania, we recognize the importance of effective riparian buffers and how vital they are to the protection of not only the Commonwealth's elite coldwater fisheries, but also to our communities as we combat climate change.

Riparian buffers are one of the strongest defenses for our streams, they are used to filter pollutants before they enter our waterways, act as streambank stabilizers, and helps slow down water flow for floodplain management. Our communities are being faced with more frequent and more severe storms than ever before. Effective and well managed riparian buffers can be used as a practical best management practice for flood mitigation from cities to rural areas and beyond. Trout Unlimited has been working for years in this state to assess streams for proper designations and protections, completing culvert assessments to ensure they are up to current standards and ready for possible flooding events, enduring decision maker education at the local, state, and federal levels to increase knowledge of how effective Best Management Practices, like effect riparian buffer zones, can help protect our communities during intense storm events.

Trout Unlimited's mission to protect, preserve, and restore our nation's coldwater fisheries aligns with the mission of Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection, and Trout Unlimited fully supports PA-DEP's ability to safeguard the streams of the Commonwealth. We encourage legislators to entrust them to complete their duties in carrying out the important regulatory protocols and work referred to them in this specific legislation.

Trout Unlimited strongly supports activism to preserve, conserve, and restore coldwater fisheries across the country. We would like to thank Representative Webster and all other co-sponsors of HB 1275 for

your support towards better conservation practices in Pennsylvania. Thank you to the PA House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for space to express Trout Unlimited's support.

Please always feel free to use Trout Unlimited as a resource. Thank you.