
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1767 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY YOUNGBLOOD, CRUZ, RABB, DONATUCCI, THOMAS,
O'BRIEN, V. BROWN AND SCHLOSSBERG, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Commonwealth Advisory Board on Geographic
2 Names; and imposing duties on the Commonwealth Advisory Board
3 on Geographic Names.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Commonwealth
8 Advisory Board on Geographic Names Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative intent.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) Certain geographic location names in this
12 Commonwealth are offensive and insulting to this
13 Commonwealth's residents, history and heritage.

14 (2) These geographic location names should be replaced
15 by names that better reflect this Commonwealth's residents,
16 history and heritage without resorting to harmful or
17 offensive stereotypes, names, words or phrases.

18 (3) The United States Board on Geographic Names, the

1 Federal agency which determines official geographic location
2 name changes, is a reactive body and does not initiate name
3 proposals, only accepting proposals from Federal, State,
4 local and tribal agencies, as well as from local
5 organizations and private citizens.

6 (4) The process by which the Federal Government follows
7 to make official changes to geographic location names is
8 burdensome, complicated and lengthy.

9 (5) The establishment of the Commonwealth Advisory Board
10 on Geographic Names to address certain geographic location
11 names in this Commonwealth will be beneficial in identifying
12 offensive and insulting geographic location names and
13 assisting the Commonwealth and local governments, as well as
14 local organizations and private citizens, in the burdensome
15 process of proposing changes to geographic location names in
16 this Commonwealth.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
19 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
20 context clearly indicates otherwise:

21 "Board." The Commonwealth Advisory Board on Geographic
22 Names.

23 "Department." The Department of Conservation and Natural
24 Resources of the Commonwealth.

25 Section 4. Commonwealth Advisory Board on Geographic Names.

26 (a) Establishment.--The Commonwealth Advisory Board on
27 Geographic Names is established within the department.

28 (b) Purpose.--The board shall facilitate discussion among
29 its membership to consider issues related to geographic location
30 names, make recommendations to the appropriate Federal, State

1 and local agencies and assist the Commonwealth and local
2 governments, including local organizations and private citizens,
3 in the process of proposing changes to geographic location
4 names.

5 (c) Members.--The board shall be composed of the following
6 members:

7 (1) The Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources
8 or the secretary's designee.

9 (2) The Secretary of Environmental Protection or the
10 secretary's designee.

11 (3) The Secretary of Transportation or the secretary's
12 designee.

13 (4) One member of the Senate appointed by the President
14 pro Tempore of the Senate.

15 (5) One member of the Senate appointed by the Majority
16 Leader of the Senate.

17 (6) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority
18 Leader of the Senate.

19 (7) One member of the House of Representatives appointed
20 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

21 (8) One member of the House of Representatives appointed
22 by the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

23 (9) One member of the House of Representatives appointed
24 by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

25 (10) A representative from the Historical Society of
26 Pennsylvania, appointed by the Governor.

27 (11) A representative from the Pennsylvania State
28 Archives, appointed by the Governor.

29 (c) Chairs.--The board shall elect a chair and vice chair
30 from among its membership.

1 (d) Term.--Except members under subsection (c) (1), (2), (3),
2 all members of the board shall serve a term of three years and
3 may serve on the board until a successor is appointed.

4 (e) Compensation.--Members of the board shall receive no
5 compensation for service on the board but shall be reimbursed
6 for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties under
7 this act.

8 (f) Staff support.--The department shall provide staff
9 support to the board.

10 Section 5. Duties of board.

11 The board shall:

12 (1) Meet at least once a year to consider issues related
13 to geographic location names and make recommendations to the
14 appropriate Federal, State and local agencies for proposed
15 geographic location name changes.

16 (2) Develop a process to assist the Commonwealth and
17 local governments, including local organizations and private
18 citizens of this Commonwealth, in the process of
19 proposing changes to a geographic location name.

20 (3) Develop educational materials and outreach
21 opportunities for the department to make available regarding
22 the purpose and mission of the board.

23 (4) Issue an annual report detailing recommendations or
24 actions made by the board. The annual report shall be
25 submitted to the chair and minority chair of the State
26 Government Committee of the Senate and the chair and minority
27 chair of the State Government Committee of the House of
28 Representatives by December 1, 2018, and by December 1 of
29 each year thereafter.

30 Section 6. Effective date.

1 This act shall take effect in 90 days.