
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 416 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY DELOZIER, HILL-EVANS, HENNESSEY, M. K. KELLER,
ROTHMAN, GLEIM, MILLARD, STURLA AND MURT, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, FEBRUARY 11, 2019

AN ACT

1 Designating the Eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*
2 *alleganiensis*) as the official amphibian of the Commonwealth
3 of Pennsylvania.

4 The General Assembly finds that:

5 (1) The Eastern hellbender is a unique amphibian native
6 to a select handful of areas, one of which is this
7 Commonwealth.

8 (2) The Eastern hellbender is the largest North American
9 salamander and is the third largest salamander in the world,
10 with the ability to grow to 29 inches in length.

11 (3) The Eastern hellbender is not listed as the official
12 amphibian of any other state or commonwealth despite its
13 range.

14 (4) The Eastern hellbender is considered an indicator
15 species due to its sensitivity to poor water quality and
16 pollution.

17 (5) Pennsylvania is widely known for waterways, rivers
18 and streams that reach an approximate total length of 1,239

1 square miles and have a great value to Pennsylvania's economy
2 and environment.

3 (6) Pennsylvania has had a history of poor water quality
4 due to pollution and other elements.

5 (7) The Eastern hellbender is considered a species of
6 special concern in this Commonwealth and in New York.

7 (8) The Eastern hellbender is listed as endangered in
8 Maryland, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana and is considered
9 threatened in Alabama.

10 (9) The Eastern hellbender population is drastically
11 declining due to poor water quality in Pennsylvania's rivers
12 and streams.

13 (10) The Eastern hellbender has been historically found
14 in nearly every western county in Pennsylvania; however,
15 recent studies show approximately half of those counties no
16 longer support the species.

17 (11) Due to the Eastern hellbender's sensitivity and
18 status as an indicator species, it proves to be a positive
19 symbol for water quality efforts in Pennsylvania.

20 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
21 hereby enacts as follows:

22 Section 1. Official State amphibian.

23 The Eastern hellbender is selected, designated and adopted as
24 the official amphibian of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

25 Section 2. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect immediately.