

Representative Mike Turzai
110 Main Capital Building
PO Box 202028
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

RE: HB1576

Dear Representative Turzai,

Please oppose HB 1576 which is contrary to the intent of Pennsylvania's Environmental Bill of Rights, Article 1, and Section 27 --- the environmental amendment to Pennsylvania's Constitution.

All conservation organizations and environmentalists plus the Game Commission (PGC) and the Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) are against this bill?

HB 1576 is unnecessary and counterproductive for the following reasons:

- This bill will clearly politicize the listing process and at a new (unfunded) cost to hunters, anglers and the public. If HB1576 passes, every proposed listing of a troubled species would get a pass/fail by politicians whom are not sufficiently free of the influence (= lobbying, campaign contributions) of the extractive industries and developers. Pennsylvanians deserve to have listing decisions developed by scientists on whom they can rely to make judgments free from the influence, conscious or unconscious, of those that stand to gain or lose.
- Are the extractive industries and developers significantly constrained by the current state listing and permitting process? This is the alleged basis for HB1576. Unfortunately, authors and sponsors of HB1576 failed to answer this question and instead have relied on a few anecdotal complaints, many of which relate to the protection of the federally listed species, e.g. the endangered Indiana bat. While consistently glossed over during the hearings on this bill, HB1576 will not and cannot have any impact on the protection of federally listed species.
- The sheer quantity of "completed" and ongoing resource extraction and development suggests that the current permitting process for state-specific listed species has not been and is not a significant impediment. For examples, despite the economic downturn:
 - 1) Since January year 2000, over 41,311 gas wells have been drilled in rural Pennsylvania.
 - 2) Since 2002, 262,809 building permits have been issued.
 - 3) Since 2002, trees have been removed from 475,500 acres of Penn's Woods.
 - 4) In one year (2012) the PGC and PFBC received 3,840 projects for review.

It's clear the PGC and PFBC have been providing a valuable public service at no cost to the General Fund or state taxpayer. Given that fish and wildlife are public trusts, it's logical that the public contribute to the caretaking of endangered and threatened species. If the current listing and permitting processes

have a shortcoming, it's that the quantity of projects requiring permits sometimes overwhelms the limited staffs of the Commissions. HB1576 won't change this, but appropriations from the General Fund would at once enfranchise the public and speed up the permit review process.

SIMPLIFIED VERSION FOLLOWS

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Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

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Please oppose HB 1576 which is contrary to the intent of Pennsylvania's Environmental Bill of Rights, Article 1, and Section 27 --- the environmental amendment to Pennsylvania's Constitution.

All conservation organizations and environmentalists plus the Game Commission (PGC) and the Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) oppose HB 1576.

HB 1576 is unnecessary and counterproductive for the following reasons:

- This bill will politicize the listing process and add an unfunded mandate (with the cost borne by hunters, anglers and the public). Pennsylvanians deserve to have listing decisions developed by scientists on whom they can rely to make judgments free from the influence, conscious or unconscious, of those that stand to gain or lose.
- Extractive industries and developers are not significantly constrained by the current state listing and permitting process.
 - 1) Since January year 2000, over 41,311 gas wells have been drilled in rural Pennsylvania.
 - 2) Since 2002, 262,809 building permits have been issued.
 - 3) Since 2002, trees have been removed from 475,500 acres of Penn's Woods.
 - 4) In one year (2012) the PGC and PFBC received 3,840 projects for review.

The PGC and PFBC have been providing a valuable public service at no cost to the General Fund or state taxpayer. Given that fish and wildlife are public trusts, it's logical that the public contribute to the caretaking of endangered and threatened species. If the current listing and permitting processes have a shortcoming, it's that the quantity of projects requiring permits sometimes overwhelms the limited staffs of the Commissions. HB1576 won't change this, but appropriations from the General Fund would at once enfranchise the public and speed up the permit review process.

LETTER FROM BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL FOLLOWS

December 5, 2013

Representative Mike Turzai
110 Main Capital Building
PO Box 202028
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2028

RE: HB1576

Dear Representative Turzai,

Thank you for your time in review of this letter and your commitment to improving the state of Pennsylvania. Bat Conservation, International (BCI) is a non-profit dedicated to conserving the world's bats and their ecosystems to ensure a healthy planet. And we, too, have a long relationship and commitment to the state of Pennsylvania.

BCI has been conducting workshops in the state of Pennsylvania for over 15 years. These workshops help train new biologists and educators, as well as provide critical information about bat species presence and abundance in Pennsylvania. In 2012, I personally helped train 12 participants in bat management and conservation as we trapped bats on the Little Juniata River. This summer, we helped British Petroleum implement mitigation by designing and installing bat gates in Lycoming County. BCI has been working with the wind industry in Pennsylvania since 2005, including ground-breaking research with Iberdrola Resources that reduces bat fatalities at wind facilities. BCI has a track record of successfully working with industry, as well as state and federal partners. It is through this history that we reach out to you on House Bill 1576.

White-nose Syndrome has decimated bat populations across North America since it arrived in 2007. The state of Pennsylvania has incurred the most severe impacts, please see the graph below. There is a serious economic cost to this loss. The value of bats to the agricultural industry in the US is approximately \$22.9 billion a year (Boyles et al. 2011). The state of Pennsylvania alone receives \$292 million in ecosystem services each year from bats. This is 16% of the market value of PA's crops sold. The loss of bats on Pennsylvania's landscape will be costly.

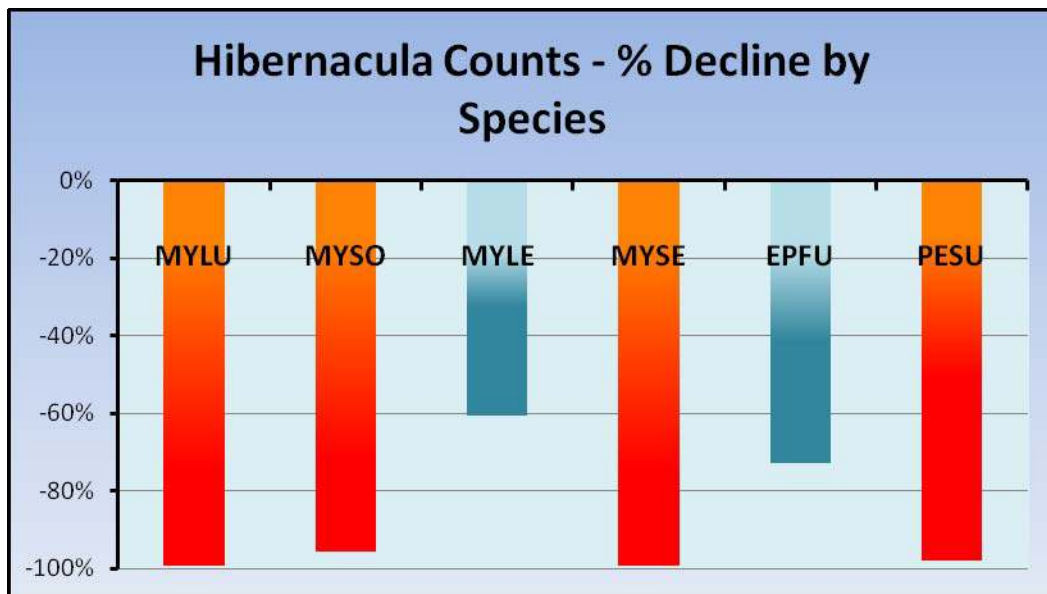
BCI is concerned about HB1576, not only for its potential impact on Pennsylvania's bats, but for all of Pennsylvania's imperiled wildlife. As an organization that employs scientists and conservationists, we have a strong understanding of both the costs and benefits of listing a species. However, we feel that state listings can provide more benefits to species, states, and industries than federal listings. State listings are more flexible and have the capability of precluding federal listings. As such, **we urge you not to bring HB1576 to the floor for a vote** as this bill has the high likelihood of damaging Pennsylvania's native wildlife and hampering Pennsylvania's timber industry through increased federal listing regulations.

I would enjoy the opportunity to discuss this matter with you further and will be in Pennsylvania December 17-19th. Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter. I hope we can work together to support Pennsylvania's bats and other wildlife!

Sincerely,



Katie Gillies
Imperiled Species Coordinator
Bat Conservation International
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512-327-9721 ex 34



MYLU – *Myotis lucifugus* (Little brown bat), MYSO – *M. sodalis* (Indiana bat), MYLE – *M. leibii* (Eastern small-footed bat), MYSE – *M. septentrionalis* (Northern long-eared bat), EPFU – *Eptesicus fuscus* (big brown bat), PESU – *Perimyotis subflavus* (tri-colored bat)