



Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists

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On the Front Lines – So You Can Be in the Woods, On the Water or At the Range!

PGC Board of Commissioners Meeting

Testimony

July 24, 2021

Commissioners, Executive Director Burhans, Deputy Executive Directors, Staff & Guests:

My name is Mike Kriner, Director of Government Affairs for the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen and Conservationists. I am extremely honored to be providing the Federation's input on important wildlife management issues. Historically, this agency and the PFSC have worked closely on hunting, trapping, and wildlife management issues, and I look forward to further cultivating and strengthening our relationship.

Currently representing over 75,000 sportsmen, women and conservationists, PFSC's membership comprises individuals, affiliated clubs, and statewide organizations with like-minded goals and interests in conservation efforts and protecting our outdoor heritage.

An issue was recently brought to our attention by a few of our members in regard to the removal of rifles during the fall turkey season. Many disabled hunters use the aid of hunting from their vehicles. These members that reached out to us believe that limiting the use of rifles for disabled hunters will severely restrict their ability to hunt birds that are reluctant to come close enough for an ethical shot with a shotgun. We appreciate your efforts to deal with the declining turkey population. But feel it would be helpful for you to provide additional detail that went into your decision to ban the use of rifles during the fall turkey season, and specifically if you looked into the possibility of providing exemptions for such individuals as disabled hunters.

Two issues on today's agenda that we would like to share our support of:

- 1) **Expanded Mentored Youth Hunting** to include participation in waterfowl, bear and expanded spring (special) turkey seasons. Being a charter member of the initial efforts to pass "mentored hunting" legislation, the PFSC fully supports and advocates for additional opportunities for our youth.
- 2) **Eliminate the restriction on the number of traps** that beaver trappers can set during the 5-day period after the closure of otter trapping seasons. PFSC fully backs our affiliated state organization, the Pennsylvania Trappers' Association, and supports lifting this restriction.

On the legislative side, the Federation strongly supports legislation that would:

- 1) Allow the purchase of doe licenses through the automated licensing system. (SB 431 & HB 207) It is long past the time to eliminate the antiquated system requiring all applications to be submitted to a county treasurer.
- 2) Allow the PGC to have full regulatory authority in setting all seasons and bags, including Sundays. (SB 607)
- 3) Allow the PGC to set Pennsylvania hunting license fees.

The Federation is on record of opposing any legislative attempts to implement wildlife management mandates via legislation. This includes legislation attempting to set seasons and bag limits to regulate antler restrictions for seniors. (HB 913) While PFSC members have shown support for lifting antler restrictions for seniors, wildlife agency professionals should make those decisions.

Thank you for allowing us the time to share the views of our membership.

PFSC's mission: To protect and conserve Pennsylvania's natural resources, outdoor heritage, and Second Amendment Rights.