
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1475 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY DALEY, McCLINTON, YOUNGBLOOD, READSHAW, VITALI,
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MAY 22, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
MAY 22, 2019

AN ACT

1 Providing for conservation corridors.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Declaration of policy.

5 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

6 (1) Outdoor recreation is among our nation's largest
7 economic sectors. Pennsylvania is a leader in outdoor
8 recreation consumer spending, a critical component of our
9 tourism industry. The preservation of this Commonwealth's
10 natural resources is necessary for our tourism industry to
11 continue to thrive.

12 (2) Pennsylvania ranks among the top states for
13 wildlife-vehicle collisions.

14 (3) It is recognized as a public good that habitat
15 connectivity, including conservation corridors and habitat

1 linkages, be maintained and expanded. It is the policy of the
2 Commonwealth to encourage, wherever feasible and practical,
3 voluntary steps to protect the functioning of conservation
4 corridors through various means, as applicable.

5 (4) Areas containing diverse ecological and geological
6 characteristics are vital to the preservation and enhancement
7 of the natural resources of this Commonwealth and the
8 continual health and well-being of the residents of this
9 Commonwealth.

10 (5) Connectivity between wildlife habitats is important
11 to the long-term viability of this Commonwealth's
12 biodiversity. Preserving and connecting high-quality habitat
13 for wildlife can create habitat strongholds. Increasingly
14 fragmented habitats threaten this Commonwealth's wildlife
15 species.

16 (6) Analysis of this Commonwealth's habitat connectivity
17 benefits from the consideration of all relevant data,
18 including information from private and public landowners,
19 surrounding states and nonprofit organizations.

20 (7) Currently, conservation corridors in Pennsylvania
21 are managed by different Commonwealth commissions and
22 departments. A study that identifies and evaluates
23 conservation corridors would be beneficial to all wildlife
24 and residents.

25 Section 2. Definitions.

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

29 "Conservation corridor." A habitat linkage that joins two or
30 more areas of wildlife habitat, allowing for fish passage or the

1 movement of wildlife from one area to another.

2 "Habitat stronghold." A high-quality habitat where wildlife
3 populations are strong and diverse, highly functioning and
4 intact.

5 "Wildlife." Mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and
6 plants.

7 Section 3. Study.

8 (a) Study required.--The following apply:

9 (1) The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, in
10 collaboration with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the
11 Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Department of
12 Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department of
13 Environmental Protection, the Insurance Department and the
14 Department of Transportation, shall conduct a study of
15 conservation corridors.

16 (2) (i) The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
17 may consult with organizations that:

18 (A) protect birds and their habitats using
19 science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground
20 conservation measures;

21 (B) provide representation of the
22 Commonwealth's 121 State parks and 2.2 million
23 acres of forest land or the interests of private
24 landowners;

25 (C) integrate conservation and economic
26 development in a way that strengthens and
27 inspires communities;

28 (D) collect data on wildlife-vehicle
29 collisions; or

30 (E) have knowledge of relevant issues.

1 (ii) The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
2 may consult surrounding states and private landowners
3 that have knowledge of relevant issues.

4 (3) The study shall include, at a minimum, the following
5 components:

6 (i) A Return on Environment Study or the
7 demonstration of the economic benefits of conservation
8 corridors attributed to increased opportunity for outdoor
9 recreation, tourism and ecosystem services, including,
10 but not limited to, clean water, flood protection, air
11 pollution removal, mineral resources, agriculture
12 products and marketable timber.

13 (ii) An economic impact analysis of the
14 establishment of conservation corridors and wildlife
15 crossings in key areas on wildlife-vehicle collisions.

16 (iii) Identification of existing and needed
17 conservation corridors, including riparian corridors and
18 potential crossings of transportation arteries.

19 (iv) Identification of voluntary mechanisms, such as
20 easements and cooperative management agreements, that
21 affect conservation corridors. Recommendations concerning
22 any potential changes shall be formulated after an
23 opportunity for public comment.

24 (v) A determination as to whether an advisory task
25 force should be established on a permanent basis to
26 regularly update the study findings.

27 (b) Action by commissions and departments.--The Pennsylvania
28 Game Commission, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the
29 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Department
30 of Environmental Protection, the Insurance Department and the

1 Department of Transportation shall consider conservation
2 corridors as identified in the study. Each commission or
3 department shall modify, as necessary, the processes for
4 issuance, revision or amendment of management plans for lands
5 and waters under the commission's or department's administrative
6 control.

7 (c) Construction.--Nothing in this section shall be
8 construed to permit entrance onto private property for purposes
9 described in this section without the express permission of the
10 landowner.

11 Section 4. Report.

12 The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall prepare a
13 report of the findings and recommendations of the study
14 conducted under section 3 and submit the report to the Secretary
15 of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House of
16 Representatives no later than June 30, 2020.

17 Section 5. Effective date.

18 This act shall take effect in 60 days.