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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 74 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY DALEY, KAUFER, FRANKEL, LONGIETTI, CIRESI, SAPPEY,  
T. DAVIS, HOHENSTEIN, ISAACSON, BENHAM, BOBACK, HERRIN,  
FREEMAN, DEASY, HOWARD, DRISCOLL, HILL-EVANS, SANCHEZ,  
GAINEY, MATZIE, HELM AND SAMUELSON, MARCH 11, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
MARCH 11, 2021

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A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to  
2 conduct a study and issue a report on the current status,  
3 management and benefits of conservation corridors in this  
4 Commonwealth.

5 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is home to an array of ecosystems and  
6 has a magnificent diversity of plants, trees and wildlife that  
7 benefit from connectivity and the conservation of high-quality  
8 habitats, enabling species to thrive when facing habitat  
9 stressors and changing environmental conditions; and

10 WHEREAS, Conservation ensures that this Commonwealth's  
11 tourism industry continues to expand and thrive, and prevents  
12 exploitation, destruction and neglect of this Commonwealth's  
13 natural resources; and

14 WHEREAS, Outdoor recreation is among our nation's largest  
15 economic sectors; and

16 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is a leader in outdoor recreation  
17 consumer spending, a critical component of our tourism industry;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Habitat connectivity for wildlife must be maintained  
3 and expanded because connectivity between wildlife habitats is  
4 important to the long-term viability of this Commonwealth's  
5 biodiversity; and

6 WHEREAS, The ecological benefits of habitat connectivity  
7 include greater species richness, increased species populations  
8 and wider dispersal of animals and plants; and

9 WHEREAS, A habitat stronghold is a high-quality habitat where  
10 wildlife populations are strong, diverse and highly functioning;  
11 and

12 WHEREAS, The creation of high-quality habitat strongholds for  
13 wildlife can lead to more genetically diverse and robust  
14 populations; and

15 WHEREAS, It is the policy of the Commonwealth to encourage,  
16 wherever feasible and practical, voluntary steps to protect the  
17 functioning of conservation corridors through various means; and

18 WHEREAS, Increasingly, fragmented habitats threaten this  
19 Commonwealth's plant and wildlife species; and

20 WHEREAS, Understanding this Commonwealth's habitat  
21 connectivity status and potential requires consideration of all  
22 relevant data, including from Federal and State agencies and  
23 surrounding states, nonprofit organizations, universities and  
24 private landowners; and

25 WHEREAS, Different commissions and departments in the  
26 Commonwealth manage conservation corridors in Pennsylvania; and

27 WHEREAS, Many State agencies, nonprofit organizations,  
28 coalitions and public-private partnerships interested in  
29 advancing habitat connectivity across this Commonwealth could  
30 benefit from improved understanding of current and potential

1 conservation corridors and support each other in coordinating  
2 information and joint land management; and

3 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania ranks third in the nation for wildlife  
4 vehicle collisions which cost millions of dollars in damage and  
5 insurance claims each year; and

6 WHEREAS, Wildlife vehicle collisions have claimed countless  
7 lives in recent decades and ensuring motorists' safety as they  
8 traverse this Commonwealth's highways is critical; and

9 WHEREAS, It is essential that areas that provide safe  
10 wildlife crossings be identified and utilized to prevent  
11 wildlife vehicle collisions; and

12 WHEREAS, A study that identifies and evaluates conservation  
13 corridors would be beneficial to both humans and wildlife;  
14 therefore be it

15 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the  
16 Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a study and  
17 issue a report on the current status, management and benefits of  
18 conservation corridors in this Commonwealth; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the study:

20 (1) identifies and examines the approaches, statutes,  
21 measures and management responsibilities of State agencies,  
22 nongovernmental organizations and academic institutions to  
23 assist in the identification and establishment of  
24 conservation corridors in this Commonwealth;

25 (2) identifies existing and needed terrestrial and  
26 aquatic conservation corridors in this Commonwealth by  
27 synthesizing existing relevant plans and data sets, including  
28 Geographic Information Systems spatial data, from  
29 governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations and  
30 academic institutions;

1           (3) aggregates the existing economic impact analyses of  
2 the establishment of conservation corridors in areas of high  
3 incidence of wildlife-vehicle collisions;

4           (4) identifies best practices of corridor  
5 identification, corridor implementation and support,  
6 including public-private partnerships, interagency  
7 coordination and conservation easements; and

8           (5) identifies financial mechanisms and options,  
9 including those relevant to each agency and for the  
10 Commonwealth as a whole, to fund conservation corridors,  
11 including Federal, State and nongovernmental sources;

12 and be it further

13       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
14 consult with organizations that:

15           (1) have organizational missions and expertise in  
16 wildlife habitat and ecological conservation;

17           (2) provide representation of this Commonwealth's 121  
18 State parks and 2.2 million acres of forest land, or the  
19 interests of private landowners;

20           (3) integrate conservation and economic development in a  
21 way that strengthens and inspires communities;

22           (4) collect data on wildlife-vehicle collisions; and

23           (5) have knowledge of relevant issues;

24 and be it further

25       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
26 be authorized to consult with surrounding states and private  
27 landowners that have knowledge of relevant issues; and be it  
28 further

29       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
30 make recommendations to organizations, landowners and agencies

1 relevant to identified conservation corridors regarding  
2 collaborative engagement for the management of these areas; and  
3 be it further

4       RESOLVED, That the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee  
5 prepare a report of its findings and the recommendations of the  
6 study and submit the report to the Senate and House of  
7 Representatives no later than 18 months after the adoption of  
8 this resolution.