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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 1115 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY KANE, KEARNEY, COLLETT, MUTH, SAVAL, COSTA,  
CAPPELLETTI, FLYNN AND STREET, MARCH 7, 2022

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REFERRED TO STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 7, 2022

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AN ACT

1 Designating the Groundhog (*Marmota monax*), as the official State  
2 Rodent of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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

5 Section 1. Findings and declarations.

6 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

7 (1) Groundhogs are members of the marmot family, and  
8 they are also known by their scientific name of *Marmota*  
9 *monax*.

10 (2) Groundhogs are large, heavy-bodied rodents attaining  
11 weights of 5 to 12 pounds and can be up to two feet long.

12 (3) Groundhogs have coarse hair ranging in color from  
13 brown to reddish yellow, and usually tipped with silver.

14 (4) Groundhogs have five claw-bearing digits with thick,  
15 slightly curved claws that are used to burrow underneath the  
16 ground.

17 (5) While other marmots choose to live in rocky  
18 mountainous areas, the groundhog is a lowland animal.

1 (6) Groundhogs play an important role in maintaining  
2 healthy soil in woodland and plain areas.

3 (7) Groundhogs are extremely intelligent, able to form  
4 complex social networks and understand social behavior.

5 (8) Groundhogs form kinship with their young and  
6 understand and communicate threats through whistling.

7 (9) Groundhogs are one of the few species who enter a  
8 true hibernation, often building a separated, winterized  
9 burrow for this purpose.

10 (10) Pennsylvania is blessed with two famous and  
11 important groundhogs among the many groundhogs who call  
12 Pennsylvania home.

13 (11) Punxsutawney Phil, Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages,  
14 Prognosticator of Prognosticators and Weather Prophet  
15 Extraordinary is world-renowned for his predictive  
16 capabilities.

17 (12) Each year on February 2nd, tens of thousands of  
18 revelers from all over the world travel to Gobbler's Knob in  
19 Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to witness Phil's weather  
20 prediction.

21 (13) Phil's weather prediction draws its roots from  
22 traditions developed in Germany and from the innovations of  
23 the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club in 1886.

24 (14) Punxsutawney Phil has the mythical ability of  
25 forecasting either an early spring or long winter.

26 (15) Phil has only predicted an early spring 19 times in  
27 the last 135 years.

28 (16) The first legendary trek to Gobbler's Knob occurred  
29 in 1887. On February 2, 2022, Phil celebrated his 136th year  
30 of prognosticating.

1 (17) Crowds numbering as high as 30,000 have visited  
2 Gobbler's Knob for a multi-day festival celebrating the  
3 town's most famous resident, Punxsutawney Phil.

4 (18) Groundhog Day revelers inject about \$1 million into  
5 the region's economy each year, selling out 2,600 hotel rooms  
6 in Jefferson County and neighboring counties.

7 (19) The average visitor spends \$200 per day on lodging,  
8 food, gas and souvenirs while visiting Punxsutawney.

9 (20) Phil's impact is not limited to the Commonwealth of  
10 Pennsylvania. Phil has a worldwide presence due to social  
11 media and his cinematic starring role in the classic and  
12 legendary 1993 Columbia Pictures movie Groundhog Day starring  
13 Bill Murray.

14 (21) While Punxsutawney Phil continues to inspire  
15 legions of revelers each year, a second Groundhog named Gus  
16 has won the hearts and minds of millions of Pennsylvanians  
17 and helped raise critical funding for senior citizen  
18 programs.

19 (22) Gus the Groundhog, the second-most-famous groundhog  
20 in Pennsylvania, has served as the Pennsylvania Lottery's  
21 brand ambassador for scratch-off games for about 13 years,  
22 helping the Lottery generate over \$13 billion for older  
23 residents.

24 (23) Popular among lottery players, Gus the Groundhog is  
25 best known for his signature tagline, "Keep on Scratchin'."

26 (24) While it's not possible to attribute all profit to  
27 the "Gus" campaign, Gus the Groundhog is an integral part of  
28 the Lottery's comprehensive marketing efforts to responsibly  
29 sell entertaining lottery products and generate funds to  
30 support vital State-sponsored programs for older

1       Pennsylvanians, such as property tax and rent rebates,  
2       transportation, care services, prescription assistance and  
3       local services, including senior centers and meals.

4 Section 2. Official State rodent.

5       The Groundhog (*Marmota monax*) is hereby designated as the  
6 official rodent of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

7 Section 3. Effective date.

8       This act shall take effect immediately.