



**Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Senate Game and Fisheries Committee
Timothy D. Schaeffer, Executive Director
May 6, 2025**

Good morning Chair Rothman, Chair Boscola, and members of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee. My name is Tim Schaeffer, and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). On behalf of our Board of Commissioners, Boating Advisory Board, and staff, thank you for hosting this hearing to discuss the economic impacts of fishing and boating in Pennsylvania. These recreational activities complement and benefit from the critical investments of our agency's conservation and public safety efforts across the Commonwealth.

At its core, the sustainability of aquatic resources and economic prosperity in Pennsylvania are intertwined with anglers and boaters. And that work is supported by the North American Model of "user pays, user benefits," with the PFBC being primarily funded through the sale of fishing licenses, boat registrations, and federal excise taxes.

The federal Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, also known as Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux after the federal acts that created it, derives its funding from excise taxes on motorboat fuel, small engine fuel, fishing tackle, and related equipment. Manufacturers and producers of outdoor goods collect the federal excise taxes that are re-invested on behalf of anglers, boaters, and aquatic resources.

We often share the importance of partnerships, and one in particular is with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Together, we highlight the manufacturers who are essential to conservation efforts through the “Partner with A Payer” program. This initiative includes facility and field tours that showcase some of the work we do with the dollars raised from federal excise taxes. Many of these businesses and fishing tackle manufacturers are located in Pennsylvania and have been featured in our *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* magazine. *(Copies of the articles have been made available to committee members.)*

A few weeks ago, we had the opportunity to tour the American Fishing Wire facility located in Coatesville. American Fishing Wire is a prime example of innovation and ingenuity. They are a Pennsylvania-based company and one of the top wire producers in the United States. As a manufacturer, they pay the federal excise tax, which benefits anglers, our agency, and conservation efforts across the state. In addition to the products they sell, including line, tackle, tools, and lures, they also provide jobs and contribute to the local community.

Boating and angling are indeed economic drivers. And the examples are many. An angler, whether a first-timer or a lifetime enthusiast, will identify an area with great fishing opportunities. Often that location will require them to travel. They will purchase a fishing license and equipment along the way. To access the water, they may rent or buy a boat. After a day on the water, they may dine at a family-owned restaurant or stay at one of the local hotels. That angler helps support the local community and overall Pennsylvania economy, just by spending the day fishing or boating.

Our Commonwealth is unique with over 86,000 miles of streams and rivers and over 2,500 lakes, from small ponds to Lake Erie. We have a vast variety of species and terrain, creating countless opportunities for Pennsylvanian residents and visitors to enjoy. As an agency, our mission is to protect,

conserve, and enhance our aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities. These objectives lead our stewardship efforts and contribute to positive benefits to all of Pennsylvania.

And now for the numbers that convey the economic impacts of fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

Economic Contributions – Boating

2023 Economic Impact (National Marine Manufacturers Association NMMA)

Pennsylvania

- \$4.5 billion annual economic impact
- 557 businesses supported
- 16,309 jobs supported

National

- \$230.3 billion annual economic impact
- 11,834,500 registered boats
- 36,101 businesses supported
- 812,558 jobs supported
- 95% of the boats sold in the U.S. are made in the U.S.
- 93% of U.S. boat manufacturers are small businesses

Economic Contributions - Fishing

2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service USFWS and American Sportfishing Association ASA)

Pennsylvania

- \$4.2 billion spent while fishing
- 1,114,740 resident and non-resident anglers
- 32,280 jobs supported
- \$304 million in state and local taxes

National

- 39.9 million U.S. residents 16 years old and older enjoyed fishing
- Anglers spent \$99.4 billion in fishing-related expenses including:
 - \$36.6 billion on trip-related expenses
 - \$40.7 billion on equipment expenses
- 1,111,920 jobs supported
- \$17.5 billion in federal taxes

- Anglers spent an average of \$2,490 on fishing-related expenses, averaging \$917 per angler for their trip-related costs (daily average of \$47)

Outdoor Recreation Value

2023 U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Pennsylvania

- \$18.9 billion in value added
- 1.9% share of the state's GDP
- Ranked 17 in value added for Boating/Fishing Activity

National

- \$639.5 billion in value added
- 2.3% share of the nation's GDP

PFBC by the Numbers

2023-2024 Fish Fund and Boat Fund (Total \$73,516,408)

- Licenses and Fees: \$41,328,675
- Fines and Penalties: \$442,695
- Miscellaneous: \$15,015,341
- Federal and State Grants: \$16,729,697

2024 Fishing Licenses

- Over 824,000 Licensed Anglers
- Over 435,000 Trout Permits

2024 Boating

- Over 280,000 Registrations
- Over 235,000 Unpowered Launch Permits

Federal Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund

- *Pennsylvania*
 - 2025 Total Apportionment of \$10,175,606
- *National*
 - 2025 Total Apportionment of \$416,382,754