



Conservation &
Natural Resources
Advisory Council

June 28, 2016

Dear Governor Wolf, PA State Representatives and Senators:

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council has reviewed House Bill 2013, P.N. 3219, and would like to express its opposition to this bill, as it is currently written.

HB 2013 would authorize DCNR to be involved in private-public partnerships within the Pennsylvania State Park system, which is unnecessary since that authority was given to DCNR in the act that created the department in 1995. DCNR has taken advantage of this authority to expand its recreation and park opportunities since its inception. The department presently has 140 concession agreements with private firms that include ski areas, food concessions, boat rental concessions, lodge concessions, and others.

It is the opinion of this Council that DCNR is managing an excellent state park system, which was confirmed in 2009 when the American Academy of Park and Recreation Administration presented its National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management to Pennsylvania's State Parks. The state park system has been operating for more than 120 years and is managed with integrity and professionalism. Continued increases in attendance and revenues each year indicate a consumer base that is very satisfied with the operation and management of the state park system. Numerous surveys with visitors show this to be the case.

This Council takes its responsibility seriously to review policies and programs of the state park system, which includes reviews of the public-private relationships within the bureau. Council believes that DCNR's Bureau of State Parks has done an excellent job of using its authority for private development and integrating public-private relationships into the operating structure of the state park system.

Based on the foregoing, the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council believes that HB 2013 would not be an advantage to Pennsylvania's excellent state park system and, therefore, recommends against its passage in its current form. We would welcome an opportunity to work with the sponsors in addressing ways to accelerate the growth of private/public agreements to address the need for additional appropriate recreational activities while enabling the Commonwealth to maintain its outstanding reputation for providing recreational opportunities for its citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Richard Sayles".

L. Richard Sayles
CNRAC Chair

cc: The Honorable Cindy Adams Dunn