



Pennsylvania Legislative Report

*Chris
Schenck*

Pennsylvania

Legislation:

Pennsylvania now has 2 House bills and 1 Senate bill (all identical) which set fishing license fees through 2023. We have 1 House bill and 1 Senate bill (both identical) which allow the Fish and Boat Commission to set its own fees as well as the registration and titling fees for boats. Of the bills that would permit the commission to set fees **SB 30** is moving along well through various committees. If SB 30 becomes law changes will take effect July 1, 2017.

Currently, only the General Assembly can set and alter licensing fees for hunting, fishing, and boating activities. The commissions say this method stifles their ability to fund their activities and to both keep up with mandated cost increases within the agencies and carry out their essential missions since they rely almost exclusively on fees for support. While the legislation would allow the commissions to set their licensing fees through regulation, the General Assembly would retain the oversight authority to, by joint resolution, override the fee increase. Similar legislation failed to clear the General Assembly last session, dying in the House upon the legislature's recess.

Other bills of interest are **HB 675** which would permit therapeutic recreation programs to operate without the requirement for fishing licenses and **HB 813** which would allow seniors with valid and lawfully issued fishing licenses from other states to fish in Pennsylvania.

FYI Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC): Mentored Youth Trout Days March 25th and April 8th

This is the fourth year for the popular program that provides adult mentors with an opportunity to take kids fishing before the traditional rush of the regional and statewide opening days of trout season. Last year, more than 25,600 kids signed up to participate, either by purchasing a \$1 voluntary youth fishing license or by acquiring a

free mentored youth fishing permit. For more information click <http://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/FishingRegulations/Pages/MentoredYouthProgram.aspx>.

First Day of Trout Season April 1st in Southeast Counties.

The PFBC's "great white fleet" of hatchery trucks has been busy since late February stocking Pennsylvania's waterways with a fresh supply of brook, brown and rainbow trout. In addition to these fish, the PFBC plans to stock about 8,700 trophy golden rainbow trout that weigh an average of 1.5 pounds and measure at least 14 inches long. Also, PFBC cooperative nurseries run by sportsmen's clubs across the state will add another 1 million trout to waters open to public angling. Check the PFBC website above for license information.