

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Performance Audit of the PA Fish and Boat Commission

June 2025



SENATORS

KRISTIN PHILLIPS-HILL, CHAIR
CHRISTINE TARTAGLIONE, VICE CHAIR
JARRETT COLEMAN
CRIS DUSH
ARTHUR HAYWOOD
NICK POSCIOTTANO

REPRESENTATIVES

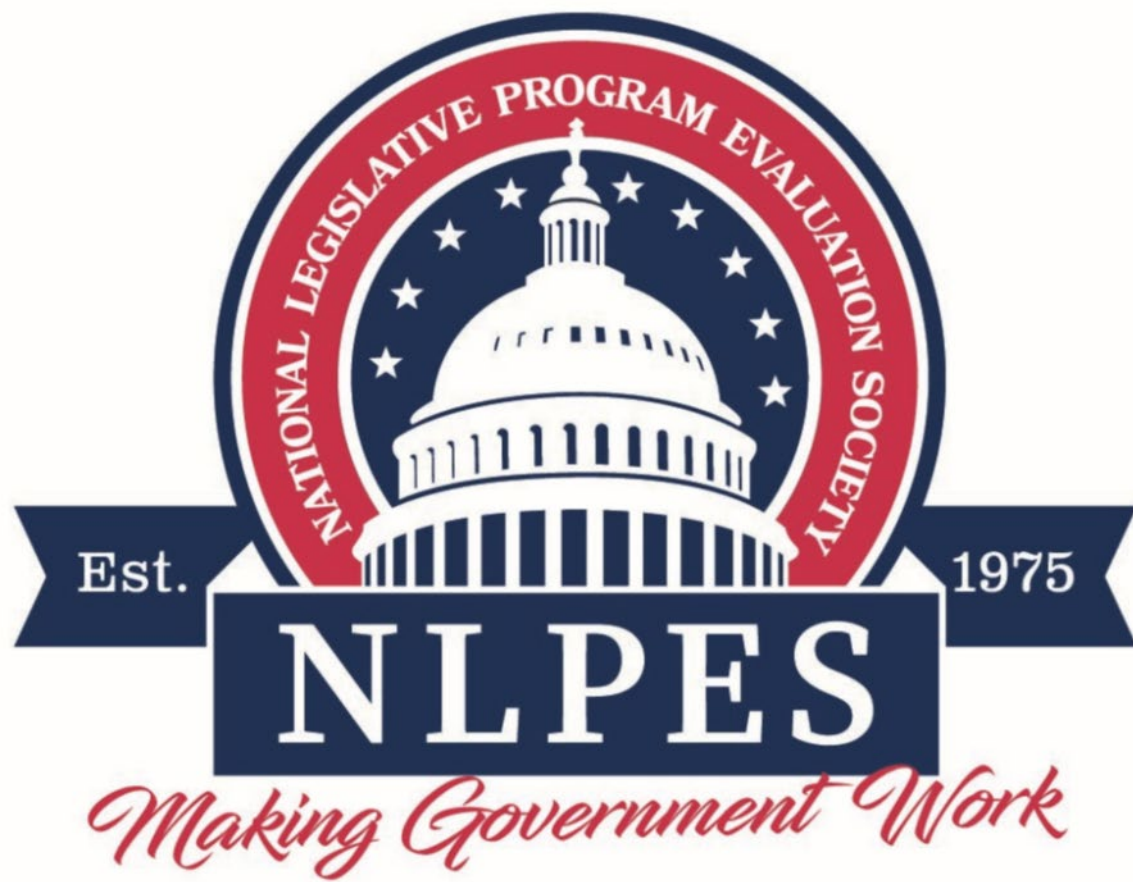
TIM TWARDZIK, SECRETARY
SCOTT CONKLIN, TREASURER
JACK RADER
STEVE SAMUELSON
BENJAMIN SANCHEZ
DONNA SCHEUREN

Christopher R. Latta, Executive Director
Stephen G. Fickes, Deputy Executive Director

Phone: 717.783.1600 Email: lbfcinfo@palbfc.gov Or find us here:

Web: <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.gov/> Facebook: PA Legislative Budget and Finance Committee X: https://x.com/pa_lbfc

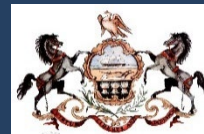
This page was intentionally left blank.



For the tenth straight year, the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society (NLPES) awarded the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee with a Certificate of Impact. NLPES presents the Certificate of Impact to legislative offices that produce evaluations or audit reports that result in documented public policy changes, program improvements, dollar savings, or other public impacts.

This page was intentionally left blank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Report Summary	S-1
-----------------------------	------------

Report Sections

I. Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	1
II. Fiscal Condition.....	3
A. Revenues	5
B. Expenditures	15
C. Fund Balances.....	21
D. Federal Aid in Sport Fishing Restoration Act.....	26
E. Financial Ratios.....	29
III. License and Registration Systems.....	43
A. Fishing Licenses and Permits	44
B. HuntFishPA.....	46
C. Boat Registrations.....	58
IV. Fishing and Boating Access Points.....	67
A. Defining Access Points.....	69
B. Analysis of Access Points	71
C. Boating Facilities Grant	76
V. Background – PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).....	79
VI. Appendices.....	91
A. Status of Prior Recommendations from 2022.....	91
B. License and Permits Sales – Three-Year Trend	93
C. Boating Registrations/Titles/Permits – Three-Year Trend	95
D. Agency Response	97

This page was intentionally left blank.

REPORT SUMMARY



Study Objectives

1. *Review the revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of the PFBC Fish Fund and Boat Fund.*
2. *Determine whether fishing and boating license and registration processes are effective for the PFBC and consumers.*
3. *Assess whether fishing and boating access points are accessible and meet relevant requirements.*

Overview

Created in 1866 and funded through two special funds - the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund - the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is responsible for administering and enforcing Pennsylvania's Fish and Boat Code. No General Fund tax dollars are used to support these funds, and each fund has distinct purposes.

When the General Assembly increased the PFBC's license and fee structure through Act 2004-159, an amendment was added requiring the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) to conduct a performance audit on a three-year cycle beginning in 2007. Since the passage of this Act, we have completed six prior audits under this mandate.¹

In preparation for this report, we identified objectives that we believed would be of significant interest to the General Assembly and the stakeholders of the PFBC. Our objectives are listed in the left-facing text box. This report is organized around those objectives. Key sections of our report include the following:

- **Section I – Objectives, Scope, and Methodology.**
- **Section II – PFBC Fiscal Condition.**
- **Section III – Licensing and Registration Systems**
- **Section IV – PFBC Access Points.**
- **Section V – Background Information on the PFBC.**

Fiscal Condition

We reviewed PFBC's revenues, expenditures, and fund and reserve balances. We reviewed fishing license and permit sales since fees increased twice during the audit.

¹ Copies of prior reports are available on our website at <http://palbfc.gov>.

Revenues

Fish Fund and Boat Fund revenues are generated from five different sources:

- Licenses and Fees.
- Fines and Penalties.
- Miscellaneous Revenue.
- Restricted Revenue.
- Federal Funds.

Other revenue sources for the Fish Fund include sales tax escrow and revenues collected in advance by the PFBC. The Boat Fund's revenues also include liquid fuel tax transfers.

From FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24, the Fish Fund received \$170.3 million in revenue. PFBC's administration of licenses and associated fees has significantly contributed to the fund's revenues, accounting for 52.8 percent of the total cumulative revenue. In FY 2021-22, licenses and fees yielded \$26.9 million in total revenue. In FY 2023-24, that number rose to \$33.3 million, an increase of 23.5 percent from FY 2021-22.

From FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24, the Boat Fund received \$87.6 million in revenue. Similar to the Fish Fund, the Boat Fund's revenue was primarily driven by PFBC's administration of licenses and related fees (31.6 percent), totaling \$27.7 million. Nevertheless, revenues from licenses and fees experienced a decline of 2.7 percent from Fiscal Year 2021-22 to Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Fish Fund and Boat Fund Revenues

Fund	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Fish Fund	\$47,201,795	\$50,849,101	\$72,212,424
Boat Fund	27,377,270	29,383,949	30,886,076
Total	74,579,065	80,233,050	103,098,500

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

License and Permit Sales

Act 56 of 2020 allowed the PFBC to set fees for specific licenses and permits for five years. The General Assembly extended this authority through July 2035 through Act 129 of 2024. The PFBC established a new

section in Chapter 63 of Title 58 of the Pennsylvania Code to outline fees set by rulemaking, a measure that took effect in December 2022.

Two fee increases occurred during the scope of this audit. The initial increase was implemented in the middle of fiscal year 2022-23 and impacted 10 fishing licenses and permits. Compared to FY 2021-22, four of the 10 licenses and permits experienced increased sales, whereas five experienced a decline, and one remained unchanged.

The resident annual license, the most frequently sold license and generating the highest revenue, saw increased sales from fiscal year 2021-22. However, there was a decrease in sales for the combination trout/Lake Erie permit, which ranks second in sales volume. Despite reductions in five types of licenses and permits, the PFBC reported an overall revenue increase from FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23.

The second increase was implemented midway through FY 2023-24. Three licenses and permits saw sales increase, while seven saw sales decrease. The PFBC sold over 25,000 fewer resident annual licenses and over 3,000 fewer combination permits from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24.

Expenditures

The PFBC monitors spending from the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund separately, as they serve distinct purposes. Both have six different expenditure types:

- Personnel Services.
- Operational Expenses.
- Fixed Assets.
- Grants.
- Non-expense items.
- Miscellaneous Expenditure Transactions.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the PFBC spent \$151.9 million from the Fish Fund. Personnel services and operational expenses accounted for 58.3 percent and 29.5 percent of all Fish Fund expenditures for all three fiscal years, respectively. Expenditures on personnel services increased by 13.3 percent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, while spending toward operational expenses increased by 6.2 percent.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the PFBC spent \$79.7 million from the Boat Fund. Like the Fish Fund, the Boat Fund's most significant expenses were personnel services and operational expenses, 52.9 percent and 22.1 percent, respectively.

Fish Fund and Boat Fund Expenditures

Fund	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Fish Fund	\$46,835,475	\$48,757,091	\$56,331,560
Boat Fund	23,914,778	24,638,721	31,195,142
Total	70,750,253	73,395,812	87,526,702

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Fund Balances

We reviewed Fish Fund and Boat Fund balances at the end of each fiscal year, which shows the agency's ability to keep its revenues higher than its expenditures. We found that the Fish Fund achieved surpluses for the three years covered by this report. The Boat fund achieved surpluses for two of the three years, with FY 2023-24 ending in a deficit of \$309,000.

We reviewed the agency's reserve fund balances from FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24. The PFBC tracks three reserve balances: committed, operating, and uncommitted. In FY 2023-24, the funds had a combined fund reserve balance of \$167.4 million.

Fish Fund and Boat Fund Reserve Balances

Fund	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Fish Fund	\$81,854,787	\$78,902,693	\$89,041,042
Boat Fund	74,101,827	79,086,823	78,398,377
Total	155,956,614	157,989,516	167,439,419

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Licensing and Registration Systems

The systems that Pennsylvanians use to purchase fishing and boating-related licenses, permits, and registrations must be functional and reliable. Ensuring the effectiveness of PFBC's service delivery platforms is essential for user satisfaction and maintaining revenue streams that support conservation and outdoor recreation programs in the commonwealth.

HuntFishPA

PFBC uses the HuntFishPA website as its online license and permit platform. In FY 2023-24, almost 40 percent of fishing license sales came from online transactions via HuntFishPA. Similarly, customers used the site to purchase one-third of fishing permits and 58 percent of launch permits in the same year.

The PFBC contracts with TylerTechnologies, Inc. to develop and maintain the website.² The service level agreement (SLA) with the contractor defines the services provided and expected performance levels. To assess HuntFishPA's effectiveness, we compared the performance of various metrics to the expected service level outlined in the PFBC's SLA. We evaluated two categories of metrics: System Operations Maintenance/Service Delivery and Help Desk Support. We assessed the following performance indicators, each of which has varying service level requirements:

- System Availability.
- Session Response Time.
- First Contact.
- Time to Resolve (Level 1).
- Time to Resolve (Level 2).

Of the five indicators, the two levels of the Time to Resolve metrics were the only two that met their service level requirements 100 percent of the time within the scope of this audit. The others had several months wherein their service level requirements were unmet, ranging from four to 15 months. We note that the demand for fishing and boating products is higher during certain times of the year. We found that 79 percent of unmet service levels for HuntFishPA were in months with peak demand for fishing and/or boating products.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, specifically during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the Session Response Time metric in HuntFishPA to incentivize desired system performance.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, particularly during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the First Contact HuntFishPA metric to incentivize desired system performance.

² The PA Game Commission also uses HuntFishPA for similar purposes and shares the contract with the PFBC.

Registration and Titling System (RATS)

PFBC's average daily processed boat registrations ranged from 22 to 215 per month during the scope of this audit. During the same period, registrations were regularly backlogged, with a daily average ranging from 80 to 3,828 registrations.

The average daily customer support talk time ranged from 3:36 to 7:05 minutes. While the PFBC does not have internal benchmarks related to customer support talk time, several customer support companies have estimated that the average talk time should be around six minutes. Using this industry standard, the Division of Licensing and Registrations (DLAR) customer support is spending an acceptable amount of time speaking to customers regarding support issues, with the average talk time for the 36 months we reviewed being roughly 5:05.

Recommendation: The PFBC should investigate how to improve its boat registration processing time to reduce backlogs.

Recommendation: The PFBC should develop specific and measurable benchmarks for boat registration application processing and customer support metrics to better track and improve the DLAR's boat registration processing and customer support functions.

Fishing and Boating Access Points

Public access points serve as infrastructure for recreational fishing and boating, offering safe and legal entry points to the state's waters. These sites range from fully developed boat launch facilities with docks and parking to more rustic areas that allow walk-in fishing. There are 594 access points in Pennsylvania, 248 of which are owned by the PFBC.

PFBC's Bureau of Engineering is required to conduct site visits at least every four years to assess compliance solely at PFBC-owned access points. PFBC provided the LBFC with the form it uses to complete access point assessments, which evaluate the following elements of an access point:

- Entrance to Property.
- Access Road and Parking Area (Pavement).
- Access Road and Parking Area (Crushed Stone).
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance.
- Parking.
- Signage.
- Launch Ramp.
- Courtesy Dock.
- Walkway.

Each element was measured on a scale, and certain requirements did not apply to all access points. Of the nine elements that the PFBC assesses, five had average scores within one-half of a point of the highest score, indicating that these elements are satisfactory. The scores of the other four elements ranged from 3.4 to 4.4, suggesting they may need some improvement.

LBFC asked PFBC for documentation for all access point assessments, and it provided complete assessments for 48 of the 248 PFBC-owned access points via an Excel form.³ The agency said that due to “technological challenges in the field,” documentation was only available via reference photographs taken at the time of the assessment for most access points. Because of the lack of documentation, we could not confirm that all access points have been assessed in the last four years.

Recommendation: The PFBC should record all access point assessments according to its developed criteria and develop a policy to ensure assessments are completed and documented every four years. This would give the agency an overall picture of access point needs and allow for better maintenance planning.

The PFBC prioritized increasing access points in its 2023-2028 strategic plan; however, it did not delineate a specific number of access points it intended to establish by 2028. During the scope of our audit, PFBC added 35 access points, three of which are PFBC-owned.

Recommendation: The PFBC should define the number of access points it would like to add to measure its progress in meeting its goals.

³ PFBC provided 61 assessments; however, some were eliminated from the analysis due to duplication of documents or missing values.

This page was intentionally left blank.

SECTION I OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY



Why we conducted this study...

This study is in response to Act 2004-159, which directs the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee to conduct a three-year performance audit of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).

Objectives

Our objectives for this study were to:

1. Review the revenues, expenditures, and fund balances of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Fish Fund and Boat Fund.
2. Determine whether the fishing and boating license and registration processes are effective for the PFBC and consumers.
3. Assess whether fishing and boating access points are accessible and meet relevant requirements.

Scope

The scope of this audit included fiscal years 2021-22 through 2023-24.

Methodology

To evaluate the PFBC's financial condition, we reviewed and analyzed revenue and expenditure financial data for the Fish Fund and Boat Fund by revenue category, including Act 89 and Dingell-Johnson funds, licensing and registration fees, and type of expenditure, and identified trends and variances.

For fund balances, we reviewed the funds coming into the agency and funds going out, resulting in a surplus or deficit, and how these numbers are trending over the scope of the audit. We also examined the agency's reserve funds and performed ratio analyses on specific revenue and expenditure factors to identify trends.

Given that two fee increases occurred during the audit period for ten types of fishing licenses and fees, we evaluated any impact on fishing license and permit sales.

We reviewed process flowcharts and documentation to understand how fishing and boating license and registration processes operate and

determine whether they are effective for the PFBC and consumers. We also evaluated metrics required from the HuntFishPA contractor service level agreement to determine whether those metrics achieve contractually required goals.

To assess whether fishing and boating access points are accessible and meet relevant requirements, we mapped where access points are located and determined how many have been added, as increasing their number is a strategic goal of the PFBC. We evaluated available PFBC access point assessment records to determine compliance with required quadrennial evaluations, which assess various elements of each access point.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge and appreciate the excellent cooperation and assistance from the PA Fish and Boat Commission officials, including Timothy D. Schaeffer, Executive Director; Robert T. Caccese, Director of Policy, Planning, and Communications; and Laurel Anders, Deputy Executive Director for Administration.

Important Note

This report was developed by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee staff, including Project Manager Anne Witkonis and analysts James Wynne, Josh Ballard, and Anthony Choi. The release of this report should not be construed as an indication that the LBFC as a whole or its members necessarily concur with the report's findings, conclusions, or recommendations.

Any questions or comments regarding the contents of this report should be directed to:

Christopher R. Latta, MBA
Executive Director
Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
PO Box 8737
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8737
717-783-1600
email: lbfcinfo@palbfc.gov

SECTION II PFBC FISCAL CONDITION



Fast Facts...

- ❖ *The Fish Fund operated at a surplus from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. The Boat Fund had two years of surpluses and a deficit in FY 2023-24.*
- ❖ *In FY 2023-24, the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund maintained a total reserve of \$89 million and \$78.4 million, respectively. These reserves include operating, committed, and uncommitted reserve funds.*
- ❖ *Since the LBFC audited the PFBC in 2022, there have been two fee increases for ten fishing licenses/permits. The fees were most recently increased in December 2023.*

The PFBC's authority is derived through Title 30 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes (Pa.C.S.). Title 30 identifies two special funds, the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund, that financially support the agency's operations. Title 30 delineates provisions relating to PFBC's administration of each of these funds, including mechanisms for managing revenues and expenditures.

Both funds have separate and distinct purposes. Broadly, the Fish Fund finances the administration and enforcement of applicable fish laws and the protection/propagation of aquatic life. The Boat Fund finances the administration and enforcement of programs relating to boats and boating activities.

In this section of the report, we present our analysis of the PFBC's fiscal condition, including a review of revenue and expenditures for each fund from FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24. Overall, we found that the PFBC's fiscal condition, for both the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund, was secure in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, maintaining surpluses in those fiscal years. In FY 2023-24, the Fish Fund continued to generate a surplus, while the Boat Fund was under a deficit.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, PFBC expended \$151.9 million and \$79.7 million from the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund, respectively, with both funds reaching their peak expenditures in FY 2023-24. During this period, PFBC also generated \$170.3 million in Fish Fund revenues and \$87.6 million in Boat Fund revenues, with the largest amount of revenues collected in FY 2023-24. The expenditures for both funds were primarily allocated toward funding the agency's personnel services, and most of the revenues from both funds were derived from the agency's administration of licenses and related fees.

Key Findings

We reviewed the PFBC's fiscal condition, encompassing the agency's management and administration of revenues, expenditures, and reserves. Among our discussion of various trends in the PFBC's fiscal condition, key highlights of our findings include the following:

Revenues

1. Since the LBFC's audit of the PFBC in 2022, the Fish Fund and Boat fund recorded the highest revenue figures in FY 2023-24, generating revenues of \$72.2 million and \$30.9 million, respectively. Further, in FY 2023-24, 46 percent of Fish Fund revenue and 29.3 percent of Boat Fund revenue were attributable to licensing sales, boat registrations, and administration of pertinent fees. License sales have consistently served as the primary source of revenue for both funds from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24.
2. The Fish Fund's restricted revenue increased by 584.1 percent from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, primarily driven by the PFBC's receipt of \$15.3 million in settlement payments from Monsanto, which the PFBC received in FY 2023-24.
3. There have been two fee increases for fishing licenses/permits since the LBFC's audit of the PFBC in 2022. The first fee increase occurred on December 31, 2022, and the second on December 1, 2023. The number of annual resident licenses increased by 0.8 percent in FY 2022-23 from FY 2021-22, following the first fee increase, but declined by 4.1 percent from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, following the second fee increase.
4. Fish Fund per capita and per license revenues have increased during the scope of this audit. Revenues per capita for the Boat Fund remain consistent, but revenues per registration have declined by 8.8 percent.

Expenditures.

5. The PFBC expends funds from the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund for eligible activities and uses listed in the Fish and Boat Code.⁴
6. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) expended \$31.2 million from the Boat Fund for the fiscal year 2023-24, representing a 26.6 percent increase compared to FY 2022-23. A notable rise in expenditures related to Act 89, categorized under non-expense items for FY 2023-24, contributed to this overall increase. Furthermore, the PFBC transferred \$7.2 million to the Pennsylvania Department of General Services to commence projects associated with Act 89, specifically for improving hazardous dams, marking an increase of 1,071.9 percent from FY 2022-23.⁵

⁴ For details related to specific, allowable activities/uses for both funds, see Section I (Background).

⁵ Funds for expenditures from the Act 89 Hazardous Dam Restricted Revenue Account accumulate in PFBC's committed funds until they are needed for hazardous dam repair.

7. The PFBC expended \$41,334 and \$983,424 from annual appropriations from the State Gaming Fund and the Unconventional Gas Well Fund, increases of 150 percent and 27.4 percent, respectively, from FY 2022-23. The Unconventional Gas Well Fee program funds the PFBC to help cover costs related to reviewing applications for permits to drill unconventional gas wells. Further, the PFBC uses a portion of the State Gaming Fund to compensate counties, townships, and school districts for land acquired for preservation.
8. Fish Fund expenditures per capita declined from \$3.95 to \$3.88, a 1.7 percent decrease. However, in FY 2023-24, that figure rose to \$4.35 per capita. Fish fund expenditure per license declined from \$83.11 to \$80.78. From FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, it increased to \$94.20 per license, a 16.6 percent increase from FY 2022-23.
9. Boat Fund per capita expenditures were \$2.41 in FY 2023-24, up from \$1.96 in FY 2022-23, a 22.7 percent increase. During the same timeframe, expenditure per registration increased 17.4 percent.

Fund Balances and Reserves.

10. The Fish Fund maintained surpluses from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. While the Boat Fund maintained surpluses in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, it faced a deficit (expenditure exceeding revenue) in FY 2023-24.
11. The Fish Fund and the Boat Fund have maintained over \$70 million in reserves since FY 2021-22. In FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, uncommitted reserves were higher than committed reserves for the Fish Fund. For the Boat Fund, committed reserves exceeded uncommitted reserves from FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24.

A. Revenues

Fish Fund and Boat Fund revenues are generated from five different sources:

- **Licenses and Fees:** Funds generated by the PFBC's administration of licenses and fees represent the largest portion of revenue for both the Fish Fund and Boat Fund. For example, in FY 2023-24, 46 percent of the Fish Fund revenues and 29 percent of the Boat Fund revenues were generated by licenses and fees. The Fish Fund's revenue includes the sale of various fishing licenses and permits. The Boat Fund's revenues include boat registration, title, and launch permit fees.

- **Fines and Penalties:** The Fish Fund and Boat Fund collect fines and penalties resulting from violations of the Fish and Boat Code. These monies constitute a small portion of revenue for both funds. In FY 2023-24, fewer than one percent of revenues from these funds were generated from fines and penalties.
- **Miscellaneous Revenue:** Most miscellaneous revenues for both funds were generated from interest on securities and deposits invested by the Pennsylvania Treasury. The Fish Fund's other miscellaneous revenue sources include money collected from sand and gravel dredging, pollution settlements, stream disturbance settlements, and the sale of PFBC's collectible patches. The Boat Fund's miscellaneous revenue includes water rescue certificates and boat safety education courses.
- **Restricted Revenue:** The Fish Fund's restricted revenue consists of a Monsanto settlement payment, interest accrued on restricted accounts, royalties from gas drilling, settlements, and agreements regarding damages to natural resources. It also includes Lake Erie special permits, an annual PPL Corporation contribution for recreational boating and fishing enhancements, and settlement for damage to natural resources. The Boat Fund's restricted revenue includes oil company franchise tax (Act 89) revenues used to repair PFBC dams.
- **Federal Funds:** Federal funds include any revenue from the federal government.

Other revenue sources for the Fish Fund include sales tax escrow and revenues collected by the PFBC in advance.^{6,7} Further, the Boat Fund's revenues also include liquid fuel tax transfers. Exhibit 1 shows Fish Fund revenues by category and Exhibit 2 shows the proportion of those revenues by category.

⁶ As discussed later in this section, less than one percent of Fish Fund revenues are from sales tax escrow.

⁷ Includes revenues collected in advance by the PFBC as part of the multi-year fishing license program.

Exhibit 1

Fish Fund Revenue

Revenue Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Sales Tax Escrow	\$153	\$1	\$1
Licenses and Fees	26,948,741	29,603,458	33,282,976
Fines and Penalties	231,600	215,063	246,721
Revenues Collected in Advance	4,135,527	4,403,261	4,719,767
Miscellaneous Revenue	3,270,037	3,320,295	4,088,888
Restricted Revenue	2,741,120	2,614,030	17,882,713
Federal Funds	9,874,618	10,692,993	11,991,359
Total	47,201,795	50,849,101	72,212,424

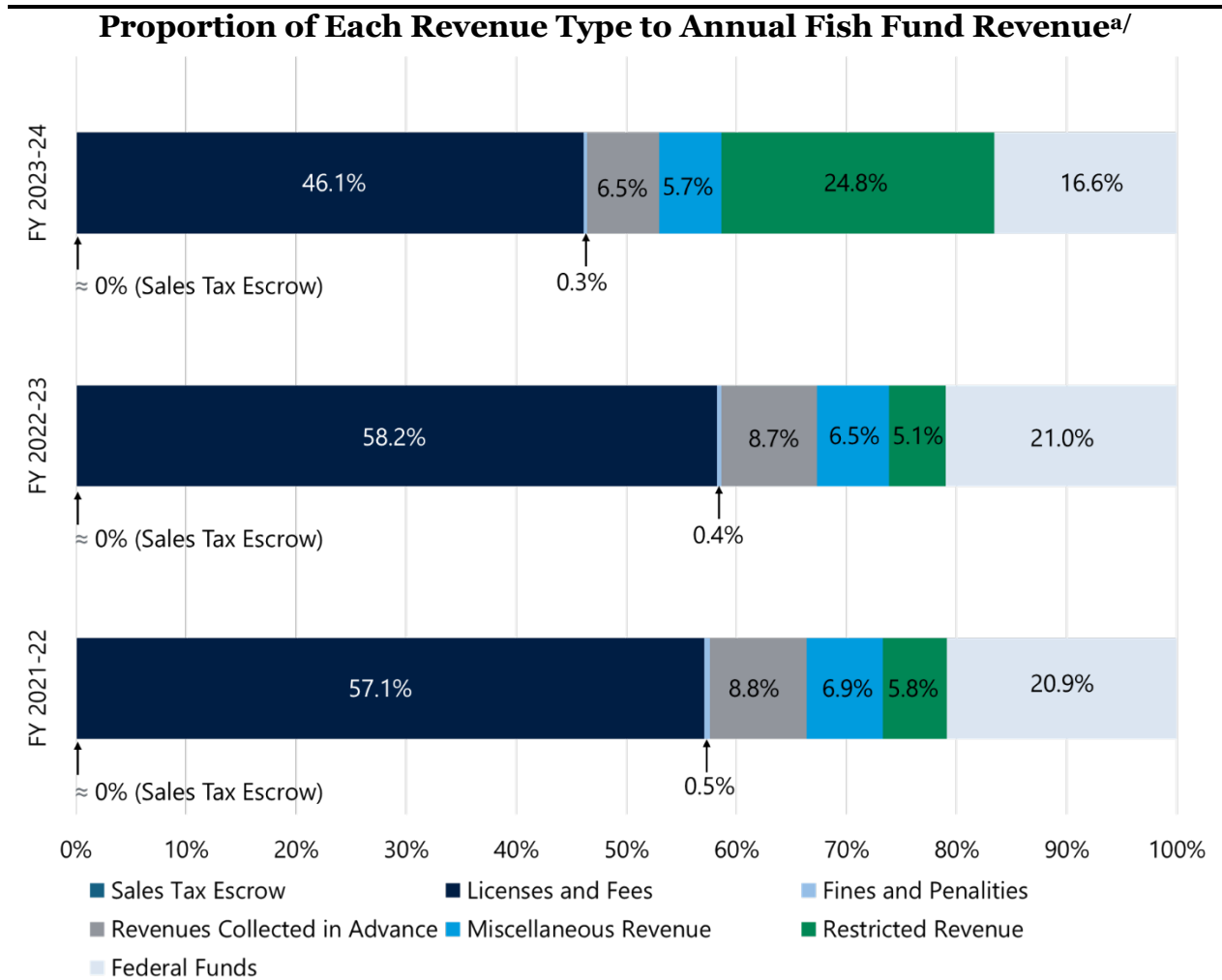
Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

From FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24, the Fish Fund generated \$170.3 million in revenue. PFBC's administration of licenses and associated fees has significantly contributed to the fund's revenues, accounting for 52.8 percent of the total cumulative revenue. In FY 2021-22, licenses and fees yielded \$26.9 million in total revenue. In FY 2023-24, that number rose to \$33.3 million, an increase of 23.5 percent from FY 2021-22.

In contrast, revenue amounting to \$155 and \$693,383 was generated from the sales tax escrow and fines/penalties, respectively, collectively contributing less than one percent of total cumulative revenues from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. Furthermore, funds derived from sales tax revenue in FY 2023-24 exhibited a decline of 100 percent from FY 2021-22. Additionally, we determined that restricted revenue increased by 552.4 percent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. The revenues from settlement payments in the Fish Fund for the fiscal year 2023-2024 amounted to \$15.3 million, significantly contributing to the overall increase in Fish Fund Revenues.⁸

⁸ The \$15.3 million was provided through a consent agreement with the Monsanto Company, Solutia INC., and Pharmacia LLC to resolve claims related to their production of products containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which damaged waterways and other natural resources across Pennsylvania.

Exhibit 2



^{a/}The percentage bars for sales tax escrow above are not visible as their proportion to total revenue is nearly zero percent.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibits 3 and 4 show the breakdown and proportions of the Boat Fund by category. From FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24, the Boat Fund generated \$87.6 million in revenue. Similar to the Fish Fund, the Boat Fund's revenue was primarily driven by PFBC's administration of licenses and related fees (31.6 percent), totaling \$27.7 million. Nevertheless, revenues from licenses and fees experienced a decline of 2.7 percent from Fiscal Year 2021-22 to Fiscal Year 2023-24. Fines, penalties, and miscellaneous revenue comprised a small portion of the total revenues during this period, with fines and penalties contributing 0.7 percent and miscellaneous revenues contributing 8.6 percent.

Exhibit 3

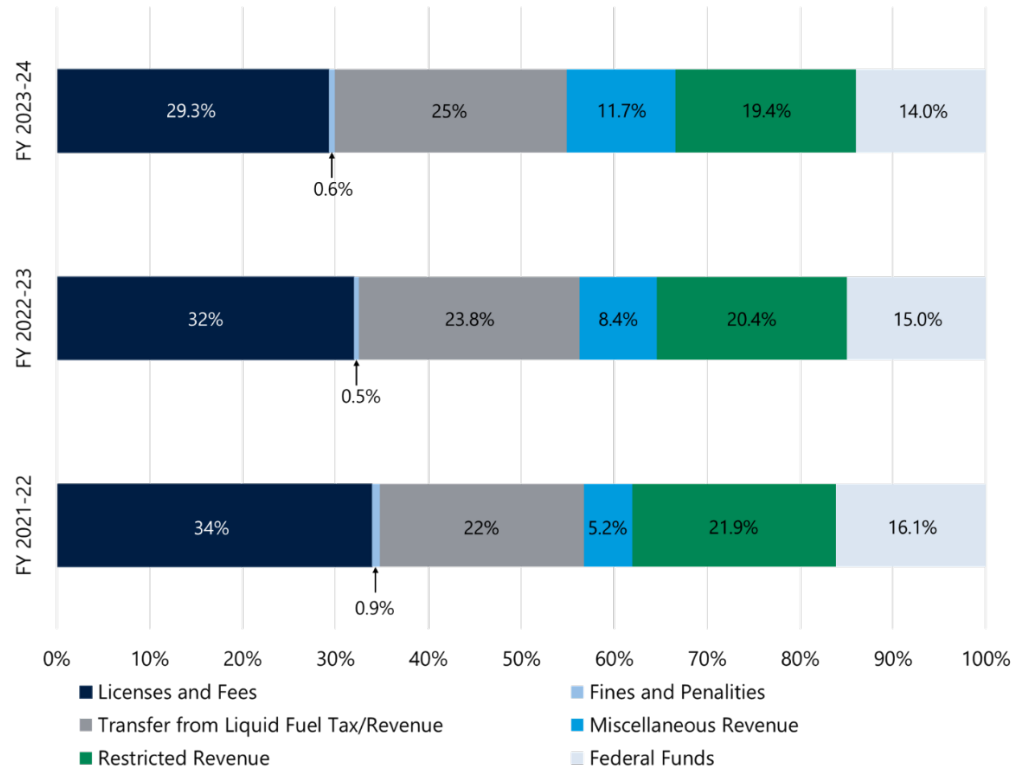
Boat Fund Revenue

Revenue Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Licenses and Fees	\$9,295,565	\$9,392,930	\$9,045,699
Fines and Penalties	232,262	156,889	195,971
Transfer from Liquid Fuel Tax/Revenue	6,011,925	6,980,504	7,717,893
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,422,183	2,454,875	3,613,062
Restricted Revenue	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000
Federal Funds	4,415,335	4,398,751	4,313,451
Total	27,377,270	29,383,949	30,886,076

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 4

Proportion of Each Revenue Type to Annual Boat Fund Revenue



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Further, we found that revenue generated from the liquid fuel tax/revenue and miscellaneous revenue consistently increased over the last three years. Specifically, in FY 2023-24, the Boat Fund collected \$7.7

million in revenue from the liquid fuel tax/revenue, representing a 28.4 percent increase compared to FY 2021-22. The Boat Fund also collected \$3.6 million in miscellaneous revenue in FY 2023-24, a 154.1 percent increase from FY 2021-22.

Funds generated from Act 89 of 2013 are another component of the Boat Fund revenues, listed under the PFBC's restricted revenues. Act 89 directs that oil company franchise taxes imposed on fuel used for the operation of motorboats or watercraft in Pennsylvania waterways must be refunded to the Boat Fund. Act 89 directs the PFBC to calculate the amount of liquid fuels consumed by watercraft biannually and provide that information to the Board of Finance and Revenue. The Board of Finance and Revenue then determines the amount of the fuel tax to be refunded annually to the Boat Fund.

According to the PFBC, the agency is not required to deposit revenue into the Act 89 fund commencing July 1, 2018. However, the PFBC intends to ensure it has enough funds to complete all high-hazard dam projects. The agency has been depositing \$6 million into restricted revenue, derived from approximately half of the agency's oil company franchise tax refund, since 2019. The PFBC has further indicated that annual deposits made after 2018 "were done in the spirit of Act 89 and for consistency and ease of accounting until the remaining high-hazard dam repairs were complete."

Analysis of License/Permit Sales

As previously noted in our analysis of Fish Fund and Boat Fund revenues, the PFBC's licenses and related fees were the largest revenue sources for both funds. To better understand the license/permit sales trend, we reviewed the PFBC's fee increases since the LBFC's 2022 performance audit.

Act 56 of 2020 allowed the PFBC to set fees for specific licenses and permits for five years. The General Assembly extended this authority through July 2035 through Act 129 of 2024. The PFBC established a new section in Chapter 63 of Title 58 of the Pennsylvania Code to outline fees set by rulemaking, a measure that took effect in December 2022.

Fishing Fee Increases. As shown in Exhibit 5, two fee increases have been implemented for specific fishing licenses and permits since the LBFC's 2022 performance audit. The first fee increase took effect December 31, 2022, under 52 Pa.B. 8234, and impacted 10 license and permit fees. Notably, the lifetime senior resident license fee rose from \$50 to \$75, representing a rise of 50 percent, while the annual resident license fee rose from \$21 to \$23.50, which is an increase of 11.9 percent. The seven-day tourist license fee saw the smallest percentage increase at 6.1 percent.

The second fee increase became effective December 1, 2023, under 53 Pa.B. 4408, affecting the same 10 license and permit fees. The trout permit fee increased from \$10.50 to \$13, and the annual resident license increased from \$23.50 to \$26, a 23.8 percent and a 10.6 percent increase, respectively. The seven-day tourist license increased by the smallest percentage, 7.1 percent.

Exhibit 5

Fee Increases in Fishing Licenses/Permits Since 2022

<i>Fee prior to December 31, 2022</i>		<i>Fee effective December 31, 2022 (52 Pa.B. 8234)</i>		<i>Fee effective December 1, 2023 (53 Pa.B. 4408)</i>	
Fishing License/Permit Type	Fee		Fee		Fee
Resident Annual	\$21	+\$2.5 (+11.9%)	\$23.5	+\$2.5 (+10.6%)	\$26
Nonresident Annual	51	+4 (+7.8%)	55	+4 (+7.3%)	59
Senior Resident Annual	10	+1.25 (+12.5%)	11.25	+1.25 (+11.1%)	12.5
Senior Resident Lifetime	50	+25 (+50%)	75	+10 (+13.3%)	85
3-Day Tourist	25	+2.5 (+10%)	27.5	+2.5 (+9.1%)	30
7-Day Tourist	33	+2 (+6.1%)	35	+2.5 (+7.1%)	37.5
1-Day Resident	10	+1.25 (+12.5%)	11.25	+1.25 (+11.1%)	12.5
1-Day Tourist	25	+2.5 (+10%)	27.5	+2.5 (+9.1%)	30
Trout Permit	8	+2.5 (+31.3%)	10.5	+2.5 (+23.8%)	13
Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit	14	+2.5 (+17.9%)	16.5	+2.5 (+15.2%)	19

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PFBC, and 52 Pa.B. 8234 and 53 Pa.B. 4408.

Next, we compared the total number of fishing licenses or permits sold with corresponding revenues for each one impacted by the two fee increases, as shown in Exhibit 6.⁹ Our analysis only pertains to licenses/permits affected by the fee increases.

⁹ Please note that multiple factors or variables may be associated with fluctuations in license or permit sales, with fee increases being one such factor. In this section, our analysis exclusively considers fee increases.

Exhibit 6

Fishing License/Permit Sales^{a/}

Permit Type	FY 2021-22		FY 2022-23		FY 2023-24	
	Sold Count	Total Revenue	Sold Count	Total Revenue	Sold Count	Total Revenue
Resident Annual	618,568	\$12,989,928	623,487	\$14,401,607	598,006	\$15,364,961
Nonresident Annual	50,948	2,598,348	53,049	2,864,183	50,363	2,930,717
Senior Resident Annual	26,595	265,950	29,841	330,170	32,102	396,536
Senior Resident Lifetime	20,608	1,030,400	17,452	1,203,025	14,480	1,207,770
3-Day Tourist	23,783	594,575	23,782	622,278	23,402	671,343
7-Day Tourist	7,679	253,407	7,549	256,285	8,066	291,825
1-Day Resident	3,061	30,610	3,519	36,518	4,080	47,479
1-Day Tourist	5,525	138,125	5,233	135,393	5,020	142,385
Trout Permit	451,368	3,610,944	449,496	4,604,678	419,730	5,390,213
Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit	77,558	1,085,812	75,014	1,205,181	71,843	1,345,190
Total	1,285,693	\$22,598,099	1,288,422	\$25,659,318	1,227,092	\$27,788,419

^{a/} This table, with our analysis, only pertains to licenses/permits impacted by the fee increases since 2022.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PFBC.

The initial increase was implemented in the middle of the fiscal year 2022-23. Compared to FY 2021-22, four of the 10 licenses and permits experienced a rise in sales, whereas five observed a decline, and one remained unchanged. The resident annual license, representing the most frequently sold license and generating the highest revenue, saw increased sales from fiscal year 2021-22. However, there was a decrease in sales for the combination trout/Lake Erie permit, which ranks second in sales volume. Despite reductions in five types of licenses and permits, the PFBC reported an overall revenue increase from FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23.

The second increase was implemented midway through FY 2023-24. Three licenses and permits saw sales increase, while seven saw sales decrease. The PFBC sold over 25,000 fewer resident annual licenses and over 3,000 fewer combination permits from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24.

While we cannot say for certain that fee increases had a direct impact on license sales, the increases have allowed the PFBC to maintain license revenues during the last three fiscal years.

Exhibit 7 shows the percentage change in the number of licenses sold compared to the percentage change in fee increases.

Exhibit 7

Changes in Fishing Licenses/Permits Sold and Fees Since 2022^{a/}

Type	First Fee Increase		Second Fee Increase	
	Percentage Change in Number of Licenses/Permits Sold, 2021-22 to 2022-23	Percentage Change in Fee from 2021 to 2022 (52 Pa.B. 8234)	Percentage Change in Number of Licenses/Permits Sold, 2022-23 to 2023-24	Percentage Change in Fee from 2022 to 2023 (53 Pa.B. 4408)
Resident Annual	0.8%	11.9%	-4.1%	10.6%
Nonresident Annual	4.1	7.8	-5.1	7.3
Senior Resident Annual	12.2	12.5	7.6	11.1
Senior Resident Lifetime	-15.3	50.0	-17.0	13.3
3-Day Tourist	0.0	10.0	-1.6	9.1
7-Day Tourist	-1.7	6.1	6.8	7.1
1-Day Resident	15.0	12.5	15.9	11.1
1-Day Tourist	-5.3	10.0	-4.1	9.1
Trout Permit	-0.4	31.3	-6.6	23.8
Combination Trout/Lake Erie Permit	-3.3	17.9	-4.2	15.2

^{a/} This table, along with our analysis, only includes/pertains to licenses/permits affected by the fee increases since 2022.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PFBC.

We found that the total number of one-day resident and annual senior resident licenses sold increased by 15 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, despite 12.5 percent fee increases. After both fee increases, these two licenses were the only types with higher sales.

Four license and permit types saw sales decrease (senior resident lifetime, one-day tourist, trout permit, and combination Lake Erie/trout permit), while the rest showed mixed results. Annual sales from residents experienced a marginal increase following the implementation of the first fee increase; however, the PFBC observed a decline of approximately four percent after the second fee increase.

Boating and Miscellaneous Fee Increases. Boating titles, licenses, and permit fees have also increased since the LBFC's 2022 audit, though those fees have not been raised since they were first established in the 1980s and 1990s. Exhibit 8 shows boating title, license, and permit fee increases effective January 1, 2023, through 52 Pa.B. 8232.

Exhibit 8

Increases in Boating Titles, Licenses, and Miscellaneous Permits Since 2022

<i>Fee prior to January 1, 2023</i>		<i>Fee effective January 1, 2023 (52 Pa.B. 8232)</i>	
Boating Title/License/Permit Type	Fee		Fee
License for operator of passenger-carrying boat	\$5	+\$20 (+400%)	\$25
Permit for floating structures or private aids to navigation	10	+10 (+100%)	20
Dealer registration	15	+10 (+66.7%)	25
Transfer of a multi-year boat registration	5	+5 (+100%)	10
Certificate of title	15	+15 (+100%)	30
Duplicate certificate of title	5	+15 (+300%)	20
Recording or changing the amount of security interest on a certificate of title	5	+15 (+300%)	20
Copies of or information relating to a title or security interest	5	+5 (+100%)	10
Issuing or providing copies of any other official document issued under the authority of 30 Pa.C.S. Chapter 53 (relating to registration and titling of boats)	5	+5 (+100%)	10
Uncollectable checks	15	+25 (+166.7%)	40
Cast net permits	10	+15 (+150%)	25
Permits for use of explosives	50	+10 (+20%)	60
Commercial fishing license, resident trap net	80	+20 (+25%)	100
Commercial fishing license, nonresident trap net	160	+40 (+25%)	200

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PFBC and 52 Pa.B. 8232.

Boat titles, and many miscellaneous licenses, and permit fees increased by over 100 percent. The license fee for a passenger-carrying boat operator rose from \$5 to \$25, a 400 percent increase. This license fee had the largest percentage increase of all other fees.

B. Expenditures

Due to the different intended purposes of the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund, the PFBC tracks expenditures from each fund separately. Both have six different expenditure types:

Personnel Services. The cost of salaries, wages, state share of payroll taxes, and employee benefits paid to or on behalf of state officials, employees, and annuitants.¹⁰

Operational Expenses. A major category of expenditure used to account for the cost of commodities, substances, or manufactured items that are utilized or consumed in current operations or processed in the construction or manufacture of articles. It includes the expenses associated with contracted services, rentals, equipment, leased software, expendable tools, and other items that do not satisfy the criteria for machinery and equipment as outlined in the definition of fixed assets.¹¹

Fixed Assets. Includes equipment valued at over \$5,000 and assets of a long-term character and non-consumable nature. These include land, buildings, building-related improvements, equipment, furniture, fixtures, and construction.

Grants. Includes all payments made by the state to political subdivisions, individuals, institutions, and organizations for which no direct services are rendered to the state.

Non-expense items. A category of expenditure used to account for the disbursement of funds that are not considered an expense of the commonwealth, such as loans or reimbursements between funds or state agencies.

Miscellaneous Expenditure Transactions. A category of expenditure utilized to account for transfers of expenditures that transpire based on a cumulative sum calculated by category instead of individual adjustments by subcategory. The transferred expenditures are originally incurred and disbursed from one appropriation and are thereafter transferred to another appropriation, typically from state to federal funds.¹²

Exhibit 9 shows each expenditure type within the Fish Fund. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the PFBC spent \$151.9 million from the Fish

¹⁰ For both the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund, personnel expenses represented the largest share of total expenses.

¹¹ For both funds, operational expenses represented the second-largest share of total expenses.

¹² PFBC reported that there were no expenditures from miscellaneous expense transfers for all fiscal years covered in our audit period.

Fund. Personnel services and operational expenses accounted for 58.3 percent and 29.5 percent of all Fish Fund expenditures for all three fiscal years, respectively. Expenditures on personnel services increased by 13.3 percent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, while spending toward operational expenses increased by 6.2 percent.

Exhibit 9

Fish Fund Expenditures

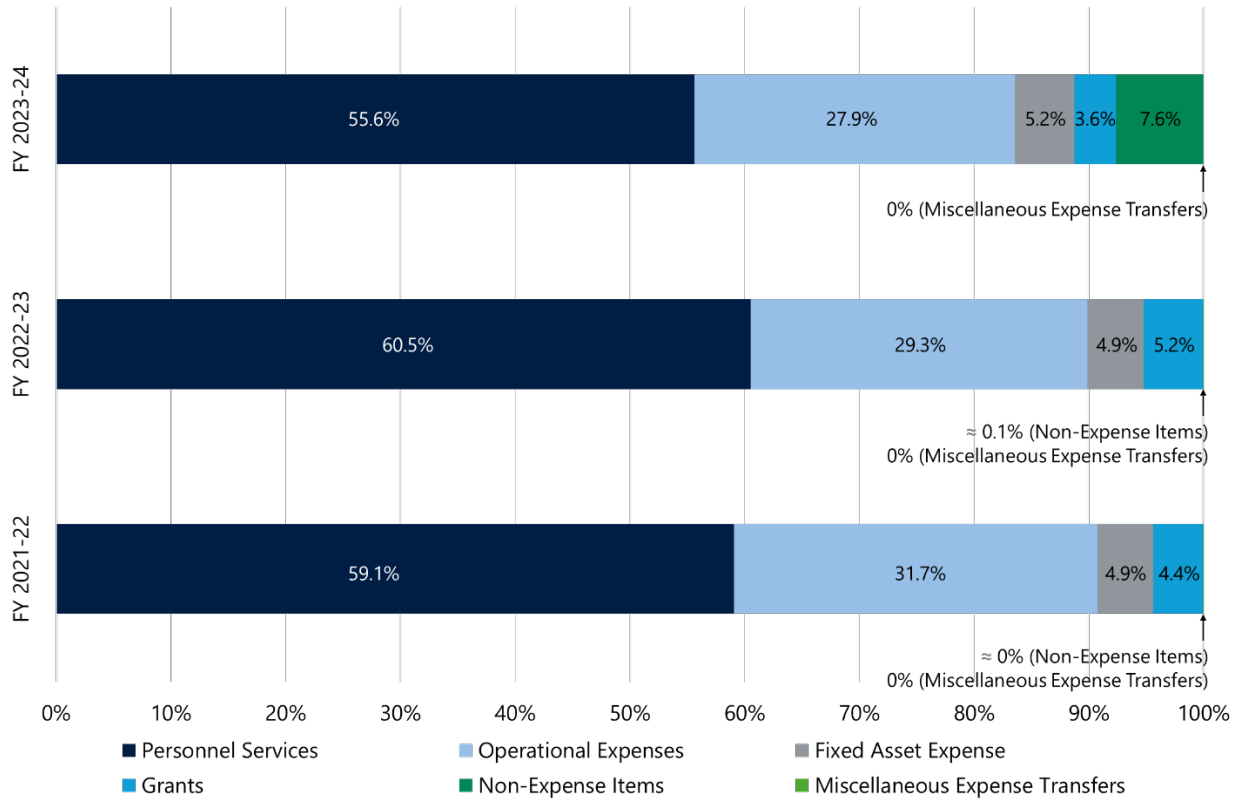
Expenditure Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Personnel Services	\$27,669,002	\$29,518,882	\$31,336,879
Operational Expenses	14,824,001	14,293,157	15,741,046
Fixed Assets Expense	2,272,650	2,387,536	2,917,121
Grants	2,050,127	2,532,741	2,040,103
Non-Expense Items	19,694	24,775	4,296,411
Miscellaneous Expense Transfers	0	0	0
Total	46,835,475	48,757,091	56,331,560

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 10 shows the proportion of each expenditure type to annual Fish Fund expenditures by fiscal year.

Exhibit 10

Proportion of Each Expenditure Type to Annual Fish Fund Expenditures^{a/}



^{a/} Percentage bars for miscellaneous expense transfers above are not visible as their proportion to respective annual Fish Fund revenue is zero percent.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Expenditures for non-expense items increased from \$19,694 in FY 2021-22 to \$4.3 million in FY 2023-24, or 21,715.7 percent. According to the PFBC, the Natural Gas and Water Access Restricted Revenue Account includes royalties and other payments from gas drilling and water access on PFBC-owned properties. Additionally, funds derived from restricted revenue are primarily utilized to finance the acquisition of infrastructure and equipment for the PFBC. The allocation of \$4.3 million directed by the PFBC from the Natural Gas and Water Access Restricted Revenue Account for the fiscal year 2023-24 includes the PFBC's formal letters of commitment to the Pennsylvania Department of General Services pertaining to various capital projects.

We also found that PFBC's grant expenditures declined since FY 2021-22. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, PFBC's grant expenditures rose from \$2.1 million to \$2.5 million, an increase of 23.5 percent. However, that grant expenditure declined to \$2 million in FY 2023-24, a decrease of 19.5 percent from FY 2021-22.

Exhibit 11 shows Boat Fund expenditures from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, during which the PFBC spent \$79.7 million. Like the Fish Fund, the Boat Fund's most significant expenses were personnel services and operational expenses, 52.9 percent and 22.1 percent, respectively. Exhibit 12 shows these proportions by fiscal year. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the Boat Fund's expenditure on personnel services increased from \$13.3 million to \$14.6 million, or 9.5 percent. In the same period, the Boat Fund's operational expenses increased from \$5.8 million to \$6.4 million, or 10.7 percent.

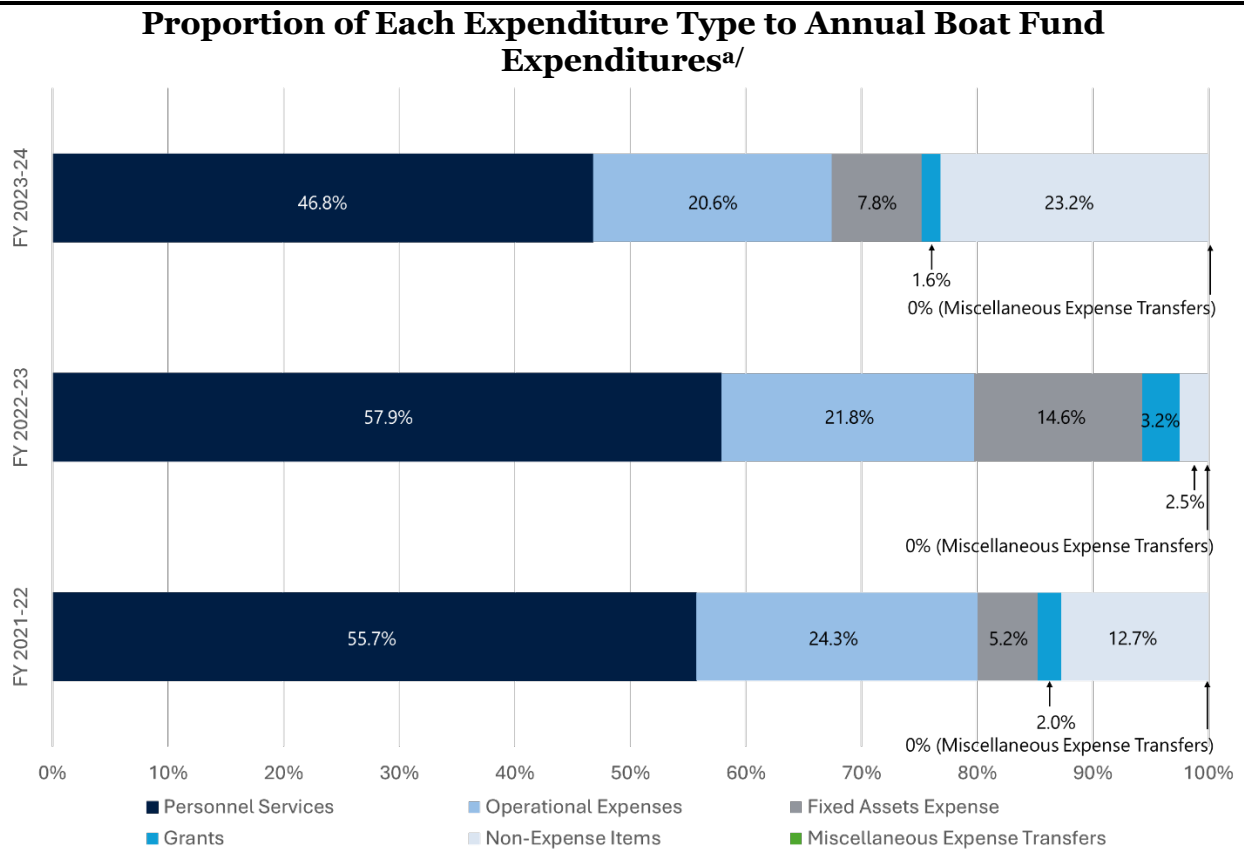
Exhibit 11

Boat Fund Expenditures

Expenditure Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Personnel Services	\$13,323,895	\$14,262,703	\$14,590,343
Operational Expenses	5,815,272	5,376,718	6,435,278
Fixed Assets Expense	1,249,579	3,590,279	2,428,754
Grants	484,611	792,076	511,059
Non-Expense Items	3,041,422	616,944	7,229,709
Miscellaneous Expense Transfers	0	0	0
Total	23,914,778	24,638,721	31,195,142

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 12



^{a/} Percentage bars for miscellaneous expense transfers above are not visible as their proportion to respective annual Fish Fund revenue is zero percent.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

The Boat Fund's non-expense expenditures fluctuated from fiscal year 2021-22 to fiscal year 2023-24. Specifically, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the fund's non-expense items experienced a decline from \$3 million to \$616,944, representing a decrease of 79.7 percent. This reduction was partially attributable to the decrease in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's expenditures on activities related to Act 89.¹³ Non-expense items are the Department of General Services (DGS) projects

¹³ For fiscal years 2013-14 through, 2017-18, Act 89 of 2013 (Act of November 25, 2013 (P.L.974, No. 89), §42; 75 Pa.CS.99511(i)) permitted the PFBC to use its Act 89 funds only for the improvement of hazardous dams in the state on which boating is permitted. However, Act 89 broadened the fund uses for fiscal year 2018-19 and thereafter, stipulating that the PFBC may use the funds toward (1) improving state waters (on which motorboats are permitted to operate); dredging (2) dredging and clearing of water areas where motorboats can be used; (3) placing and replacing of navigational aids; (4) purchasing, developing, and maintaining public access sites and facilitating waters where motorboating is permitted; (5) publishing nautical charts; and (6) other similar purposes.

that use interfund transfers.¹⁴ From there, the PFBC transfers the necessary funds to DGS, which then assumes the management of such funds until the projects are complete. Any excess funds following the completion of these projects are returned to the PFBC's Act 89 funds. However, the fund's non-expense items increased to \$7.2 million in FY 2023-24, an increase of 1,071.9 percent from FY 2022-23, following higher spending towards its Act 89-related activities.

The agency has also utilized Boat Fund dollars for activities related to Act 89, categorized under its operational and fixed asset expenses; however, these expenditures are proportionately smaller than those allocated to non-expense items. According to the PFBC, operational and fixed asset expenses, unlike non-expense items tied to project costs incurred by DGS, are incurred by the PFBC. In FY 2021-22, the PFBC spent \$3.1 million toward Act 89-related activities. That figure declined by 68.1 percent to \$984,633 in FY 2022-23, though it later increased by 617 percent to \$7.1 million in FY 2023-24.

We found that PFBC's expenditures on grant-related activities fluctuated during our audit period. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the Fish Fund grant expenditure increased from \$484,611 to \$792,076, 63.4 percent. In FY 2023-24, grant expenditures declined to \$511,059, a decrease of 35.5 percent. When comparing the FY 2023-24 grant expenditure to the FY 2021-22 counterpart, there was an overall increase of 5.5 percent.

PFBC's Expenditures from Non-PFBC Funds

The PFBC also incurred expenses paid from the State Gaming Fund and the Unconventional Gas Well Fund, which the agency does not manage. According to Act 13 of 2012, the Unconventional Gas Well Fee program provides funds to cover costs incurred by the PFBC relating to reviewing applications for permits to drill unconventional gas wells. The PFBC also receives funding from the State Gaming Fund through 4 Pa.C.S. § 1403, which the agency uses to compensate counties, townships, and school districts for lands acquired by the state for preservation purposes. Exhibit 13 shows PFBC expenditures from these two funds from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24.

¹⁴ An interfund transfer is a general ledger number used for agency transfers between the PFBC and the Department of General Services for capital projects.

Exhibit 13

PFBC Expenditure from Other Funds/Non-PFBC Funds

State Gaming Fund

Expenditure Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Grants	\$16,534	\$16,534	\$41,334

Unconventional Gas Well Fund

Expenditure Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Personnel Services	\$868,535	\$629,498	\$847,127
Operational Expenses	71,447	60,733	72,237
Fixed Asset Expense	35,265	50,112	59,225
Grants	-	31,815	4,835
Both Funds Total	991,781	788,691	1,024,759

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

In FY 2021-22, the PFBC spent \$991,781 in State Gaming and Unconventional Gas Well Funds, which were directed toward activities related to personnel services, operational expenses, fixed asset expenses, and grants. This number declined to \$788,691 in FY 2022-23, a decrease of 20.5 percent from FY 2021-22. In FY 2023-24, the expenditure from both funds rose to \$1 million, a 29.9 percent increase from the preceding FY.

C. Fund Balances

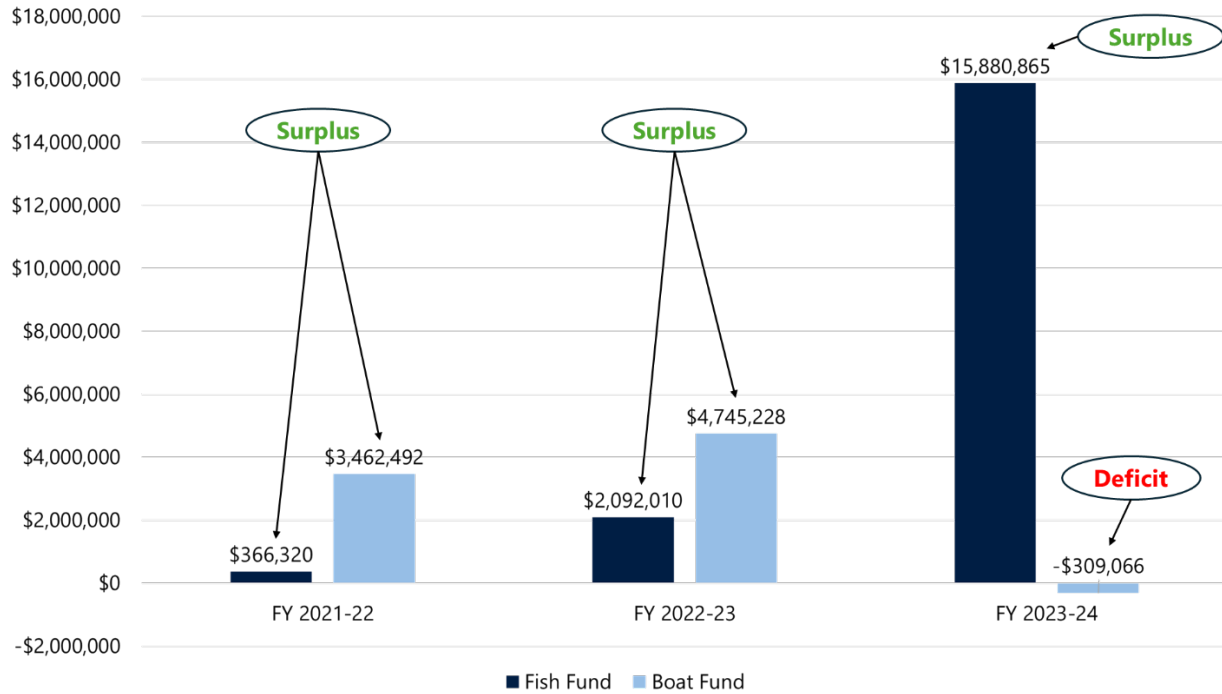
We reviewed Fish Fund and Boat Fund balances at the end of each fiscal year, which shows the agency's ability to keep its revenues higher than its expenditures. We found that the Fish Fund achieved surpluses for the three years covered by this report. The Boat fund achieved surpluses for two of the three years, with FY 2023-24 ending in a deficit of \$309,000.¹⁵

Cumulatively, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the PFBC's total Fish Fund and Boat Fund revenues exceeded their total expenditures by \$18.3 million and \$7.9 million. Exhibit 14 shows the agency's fund balance each year from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24.

¹⁵ This deficit includes increased expenditures from the Act 89 Hazardous Dam Restricted Revenue Account. These funds accumulate in PFBC's committed funds until they are needed for hazardous dam repair.

Exhibit 14

Fund Balances (Revenue Minus Expenditure)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

In FY 2021-22, the Fish Fund's revenues exceeded its expenditures by \$366,320. That excess figure reached \$2.1 million in FY 2022-23, an increase of 471.1 percent from FY 2021-22. The surplus rose further in FY 2023-24 to \$15.9 million, an increase of 659.1 percent.

In contrast, the Boat Fund maintained a surplus in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 but experienced a deficit in FY 2023-24. In FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, the Boat Fund's revenue exceeded its expenditure by \$3.5 million and \$4.7 million, respectively, which represents an increase of 37 percent. However, in FY 2023-24, the Boat Fund's expenditure exceeded its revenue by \$309,066, resulting in a decline of 106.5 percent.

Reserve Fund Balance

We reviewed the agency's reserve fund balances from FY 2021-22 through FY 2023-24. In FY 2023-24, the funds had a combined fund reserve balance of \$167.4 million. The PFBC tracks three different reserve balances:

Committed. Funds set aside for future contractual obligations, restricted revenues received through legal settlements or legislative mandates, and revenues collected in advance as part of the multi-year fishing licensing program.

Operating. Revenues into the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund can fluctuate throughout the year; the PFBC must retain funds to ensure sufficient cash is on hand to meet cash flow needs when revenues do not cover expenditures. Annually, the PFBC maintains \$11 million in the Fish Fund and \$3 million in the Boat Fund and indicated that while the operating reserve fund balance fluctuates, the funds are restored to the required amounts by the end of each fiscal year.¹⁶

Uncommitted. The Pennsylvania Treasury invests these funds on behalf of the PFBC, which are kept in reserve in case of emergency infrastructure needs.

Exhibit 15 shows the Fish Fund's reserve fund balance from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. We found that the PFBC has increased its fund balances during the scope of this audit. In FY 2021-22, the Fish Fund maintained a total reserve of \$81.9 million, over half of which was in uncommitted funds. In FY 2022-23, the total reserve fund decreased by 3.6 percent to \$78.9 million, with 46.7 percent dedicated towards uncommitted funds. In FY 2023-24, the total reserve rose to \$89 million, a 12.8 percent increase from FY 2022-23, nearly half of which were committed funds.

Exhibit 15

Fish Fund Reserve Fund Balance

Reserve Fund Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Operating	\$11,000,000	\$11,000,000	\$11,000,000
Committed	29,383,760	31,087,080	44,244,748
Uncommitted	41,471,027	36,815,613	33,796,294
Total	81,854,787	78,902,693	89,041,042

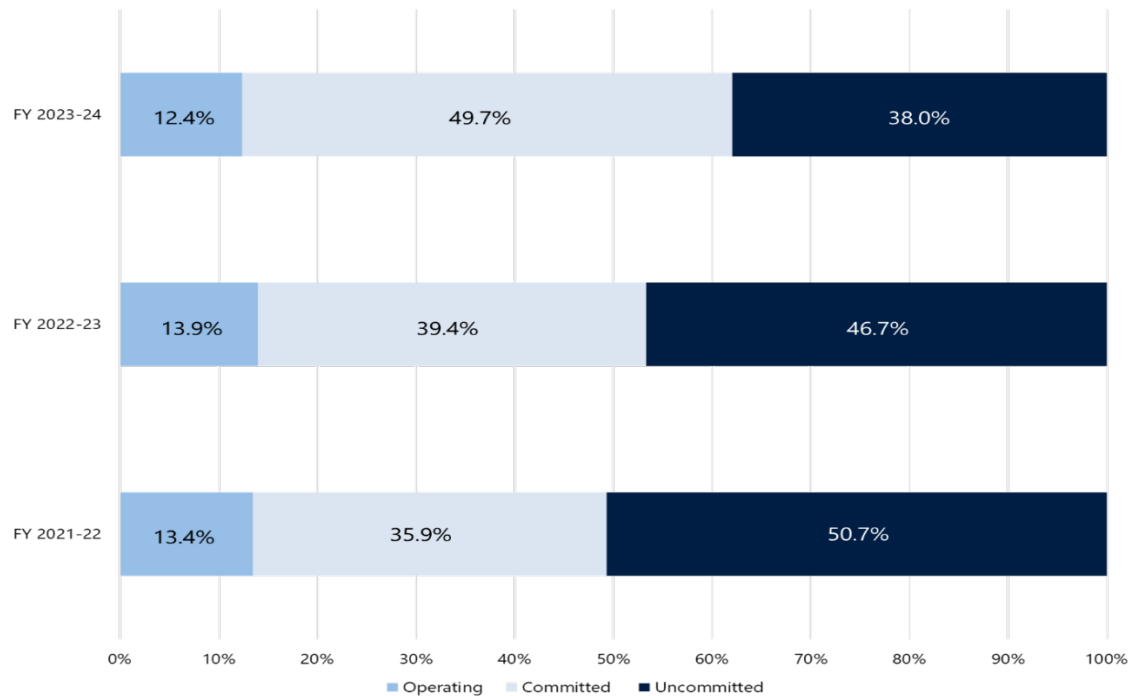
Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 16 shows the proportions of reserve funds. The proportion of uncommitted funds has decreased, and committed funds have increased yearly from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. Meanwhile, in the same period, the proportion of operating funds relative to the total annual reserve has remained consistent, between 12 and 14 percent.

¹⁶ The PFBC maintains these amounts in each funds reserve funds balances upon guidance issued by the Governor's Budget Office.

Exhibit 16

Proportion of Each Reserve Fund Type in the Annual Fish Fund Reserve



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 17 shows the Boat Fund's reserve fund balance. The Boat Fund maintained a total reserve of \$74.1 million in FY 2021-22, and it rose by 6.7 percent to \$79.1 million in FY 2022-23. In FY 2023-24, that figure dropped by 0.9 percent to \$78.4 million from FY 2022-23.

Exhibit 17

Boat Fund Reserve Fund Balance

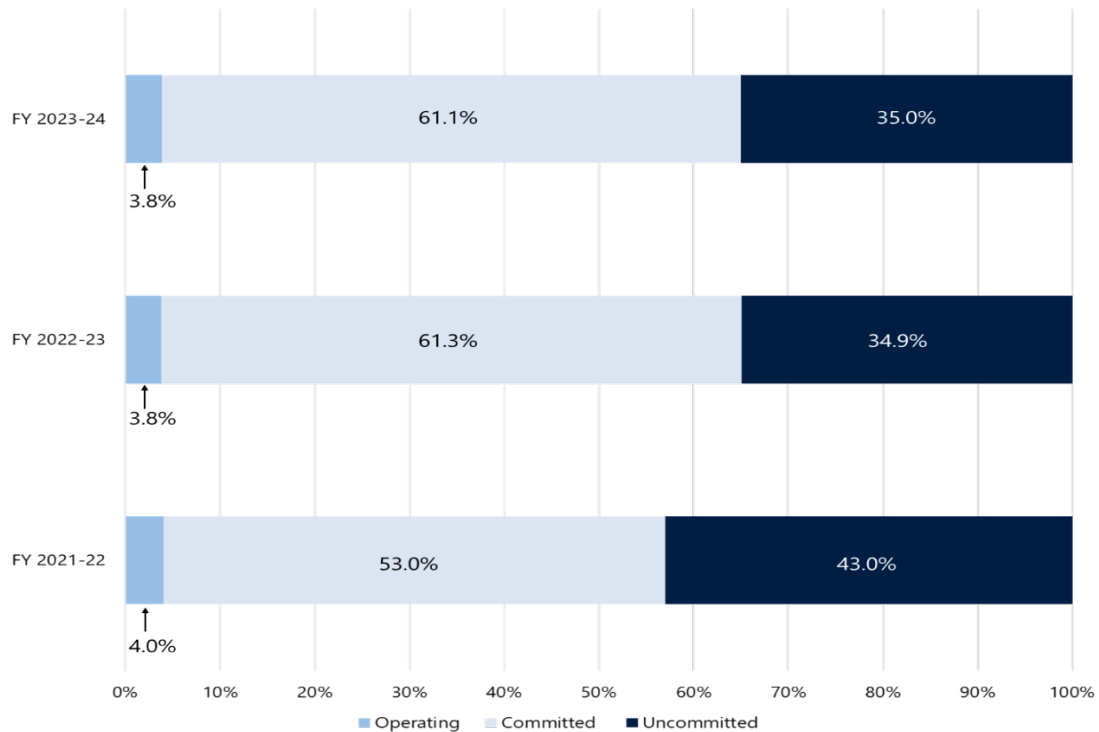
Reserve Fund Type	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Operating	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Committed	39,266,742	48,483,062	47,940,004
Uncommitted	31,835,085	27,603,761	27,458,373
Total	74,101,827	79,086,823	78,398,377

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

The ratio of unallocated funds to the total annual reserve within the boat fund declined as shown in Exhibit 18. In FY 2021-22, uncommitted funds constituted 43 percent of the annual reserve; however, that percentage decreased to 35 percent by FY 2023-24. Further, the proportion of the operating funds relative to the annual reserve consistently remained below five percent each year from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24.

Exhibit 18

Proportion of Each Reserve Fund Type to the Annual Boat Fund Reserve



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

In contrast, over half of each annual reserve for the Boat Fund from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24 was allocated to committed funds. Fifty-three percent of the annual reserve in FY 2021-22 comprised committed funds, which rose to 61.1 percent in FY 2023-24.

D. Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act

The PFBC receives funding from the federal government through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act) to support various sport fish restoration activities.¹⁷ According to the PFBC, the Dingell-Johnson Act was enacted in 1950 "to provide federal funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for the restoration, conservation, management, and enhancement of sport fishing opportunities." Examples of eligible uses of the funding include, but are not limited to, restoring and managing sport fish, conducting

¹⁷ Funding sources include an excise tax on fishing tackle, fish finders, and electric trolling motors, import duties on fishing tackle, yachts, and pleasure craft, and interest. The Wallop-Breaux Amendment of 1984 added motorboat fuel excise taxes.

research on issues related to fish management, and developing and adopting plans to restock sport fish and forage fish.¹⁸ Exhibit 19 provides the federal funding the PFBC received via the Dingell-Johnson Act.

Exhibit 19

Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund Revenues

	FY 2021-22		FY 2022-23		FY 2023-24	
	Revenue	Proportion to Annual Total	Revenue	Proportion to Annual Total	Revenue	Proportion to Annual Total
Fish Fund	\$8,368,742	84.2%	\$8,808,788	84.8%	\$10,095,030	88.9%
Boat Fund	1,566,284	15.8	1,575,311	15.2	1,257,015	11.1
Total	\$9,935,026		\$10,384,099		\$11,352,045	

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

In FY 2021-22, the PFBC received \$9.9 million in federal funding via the Dingell-Johnson Act. This amount increased to \$11.3 million in FY 2023-24, with most funds, 86.0 percent on average, directed towards the Fish Fund.

Exhibit 20 shows the PFBC's expenditures for allowable activities under the Dingell-Johnson Act. Unspent funds carry over and expire after two years.

¹⁸ For an extensive list of activities eligible for funding under the Dingell-Johnson Act, see 50 CFR 80.51.

Exhibit 20

Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund Expenses

	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
Fish Fund	\$3,841,765 ^{a/}	\$12,465,873	\$14,618,069
Boat Fund	1,010,021	2,845,297	2,175,848
Unconventional Gas Well Fund	56,308	161,035	123,251
Total	\$4,908,094	\$15,472,205	\$16,917,169

^{a/} These expenditures were not tracked in the System Analysis and Program Development System (SAP) until remedied as part of a resolution due to an audit by the United States Department of the Interior's Office of Inspector General.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

In FY 2021-22, the PFBC spent \$4.9 million on eligible activities listed under the Dingell-Johnson Act. In FY 2023-24, that figure rose to \$16.9 million, a 244.7 percent increase from FY 2021-22. The Fish Fund also had higher expenditures toward eligible activities under the act than the Boat Fund.

The PFBC uses this funding for various programs and projects, all of which appear eligible under the Dingell-Johnson Act. These include fisheries management, aquatic resource education, maintenance of public access facilities, boating access, boating infrastructure grants, Clean Vessel Act initiatives (e.g., maintenance of pump-out stations), and recreational boat safety.

Every six years, the United States Department of the Interior's Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits PFBC's use and management of Dingell-Johnson Act funds. The last audit was released in July 2020 and found that PFBC lacked adequate documentation to support labor costs charged to the program; specifically, there was an inability to reconcile labor expenses with the System Analysis and Program Development System (SAP), the commonwealth's accounting system, and PFBC used estimated values instead of actual costs. This led to questioned costs totaling \$17,701,030, encompassing direct labor and associated indirect costs, and is the reason.

PFBC acknowledged the findings and committed to an enhanced financial management system by December 2024. According to the PFBC, its corrective action was to apply grant coding to 2022, 2023, and 2024 personnel records in SAP. The SAP personnel costs will be used to determine the final financial reporting for Sport Fish awards and any necessary adjustments of previously drawn funds. Training for all PFBC timekeepers has also been implemented to ensure that grant-related

time and activity records are directly coded to the federal grant in SAP. This resolution has been fully implemented and submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the OIG, and the PFBC is waiting for their review. Currently, the PFBC is undergoing its next audit process with the OIG regarding the PFBC's operation and administration of the Dingell-Johnson Act funds and activities.

E. Financial Ratios

We performed ratio analyses to provide further financial insight into the PFBC. Ratios can be used by the PFBC while planning and managing PFBC resources and by legislators to help determine the commission's stewardship of its financial resources. Financial ratios can help identify variances and potential issues that may need further investigation. Below, we highlight some financial indicators most appropriate to the PFBC.

Revenues and Expenditures in Constant Dollars

For this analysis, we adjusted for inflation and converted current dollars into constant dollars. This conversion allows us to consider the appearance of growth due to inflation. For this report, we used the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for goods and services used by average wage earners to measure inflation.

Our analysis used the average CPI from FYs 2021-22 to 2023-24.¹⁹ We converted actual dollars for FY 2021-22 into FY 2023-24 dollars using the following calculation:

$$\text{Constant Dollars} = \text{Nominal Dollars} \times \left(\frac{\text{CPI for FY 2023-24}}{\text{CPI for FY 2021-22}} \right)$$

We converted actual dollars for FY 2022-23 into FY 2023-24 dollars using the following calculation:

$$\text{Constant Dollars} = \text{Nominal Dollars} \times \left(\frac{\text{CPI for FY 2023-24}}{\text{CPI for FY 2022-23}} \right)$$

The four exhibits below show Fish Fund revenues and expenditures in actual and constant dollars.

¹⁹ Average CPI was 282.02 for FY 2021-22, 299.685 for FY 2022-23, and 309.570 for FY 2023-24.

Exhibit 21

Fish Fund Revenues
(Actual and Constant Dollars)

	2021-22 Actual Dollars	2021-22 Constant Dollars	2022-23 Actual Dollars	2022-23 Constant Dollars	2023-24 Actual Dollars
Sales Tax Escrow	\$154	\$169	\$1	\$1	\$1
Licenses and Fees	26,948,741	29,580,770	29,603,458	30,579,925	33,282,976
Fines and Penalties	231,600	254,219	215,063	222,157	246,721
Revenues Collected in Advance	4,135,527	4,539,435	4,403,261	4,548,502	4,719,767
Miscellaneous Revenue	3,270,037	3,589,415	3,320,295	3,429,815	4,088,888
Restricted Revenue	2,741,120	3,008,839	2,614,030	2,700,253	17,882,713
Federal Funds	9,874,618	10,839,052	10,692,993	11,045,700	11,991,359
Total	\$47,201,795	\$51,811,898	\$50,849,101	\$52,526,354	\$72,212,424

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 22

Fish Fund Expenditures
(Actual and Constant Dollars)

	2021-22 Actual Dollars	2021-22 Constant Dollars	2022-23 Actual Dollars	2022-23 Constant Dollars	2023-24 Actual Dollars
Personnel Services	\$27,669,002	\$30,371,378	\$29,518,882	\$30,492,559	\$31,336,879
Operational Expenses	14,824,001	16,271,831	14,293,157	14,764,616	15,741,046
Fixed Assets Expense	2,272,650	2,494,615	2,387,536	2,466,288	2,917,121
Grants	2,050,127	2,250,359	2,532,741	2,616,284	2,040,103
Non-Expense Items	19,694	21,618	24,775	25,592	4,296,411
Miscellaneous Expense	0	0	0	0	0
Transfers					
Total	\$46,835,475	\$51,409,800	\$48,757,091	\$50,365,339	\$56,331,560

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 23

Boat Fund Revenues
(Actual and Constant Dollars)

	2021-22 Actual Dollars	2021-22 Constant Dollars	2022-23 Actual Dollars	2022-23 Constant Dollars	2023-24 Actual Dollars
Licenses and Fees	\$9,295,565	\$10,203,444	\$9,392,930	\$9,702,755	\$9,045,699
Fines and Penalties	232,262	254,946	156,889	162,064	195,971
Transfer from Liquid Fuel Tax/Revenue	6,011,925	6,599,097	6,980,504	7,210,755	7,717,893
Miscellaneous Revenue	1,422,184	1,561,085	2,454,874	2,535,849	3,613,062
Restricted Revenue	6,000,000	6,586,008	6,000,000	6,197,909	6,000,000
Federal Funds	4,415,335	4,846,572	4,398,751	4,543,843	4,313,451
Total	\$27,377,270	\$30,051,152	\$29,383,949	\$30,353,176	\$30,886,076

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Exhibit 24

Boat Fund Expenditures
(Actual and Constant Dollars)

	2021-22 Actual Dollars	2021-22 Constant Dollars	2022-23 Actual Dollars	2022-23 Constant Dollars	2023-24 Actual Dollars
Personnel Services	\$13,323,895	\$14,625,213	\$14,262,703	\$14,733,157	\$14,590,343
Operational Expenses	5,815,272	6,383,237	5,376,718	5,554,069	6,435,278
Fixed Assets Expense	1,249,579	1,371,623	3,590,279	3,708,704	2,428,754
Grants	484,611	531,942	792,076	818,203	511,059
Non-Expense Items	3,041,422	3,338,471	616,944	637,294	7,229,709
Miscellaneous Expense Transfers	0	0	0	0	0
Total	\$23,914,778	\$26,250,486	\$24,638,721	\$25,451,427	\$31,195,142

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

**Revenues per Capita and per License/
Registration**

Revenues per capita and per license/registration capture revenue changes relative to the change in those categories over time, illustrating the PFBC's ability to maintain adequate service levels through both the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund.²⁰ The revenues per capita and per license trends should increase to ensure sufficient revenue for maintaining existing service levels. If both trends continue to decline, PFBC may be unable to maintain existing service levels unless it secures new revenue sources, reduces expenditures, or cuts services.

Formulas.

Revenues per Capita:

$$\frac{\text{Revenue}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Pennsylvania Population}}$$

²⁰ Per capita figures were calculated using US Census data for total Pennsylvania population.

Revenues per License (Fish Fund-specific):²¹

$$\frac{\text{Revenue}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Annual Resident Licenses}}$$

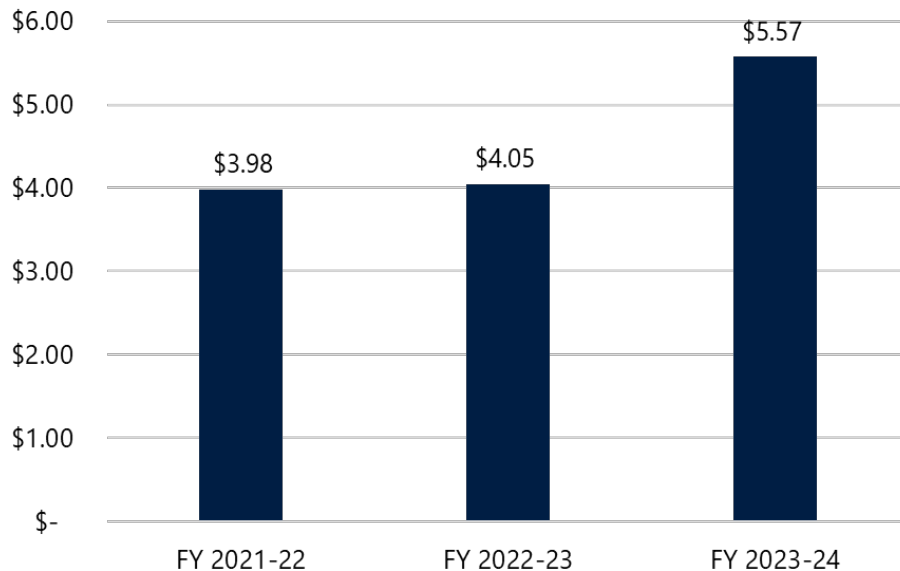
Revenues per Registration (Boat Fund-specific):

$$\frac{\text{Revenue}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Boat Registrations}}$$

Fish Fund Revenues per Capita and per License. We computed the Fish Fund revenues per capita and per license. These computations show how much revenue was generated per capita and per license from one or more revenue sources in the Fish Fund. Exhibits 25 and 26 show these results by fiscal year.

Exhibit 25

Fish Fund Revenues per Capita
(in Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

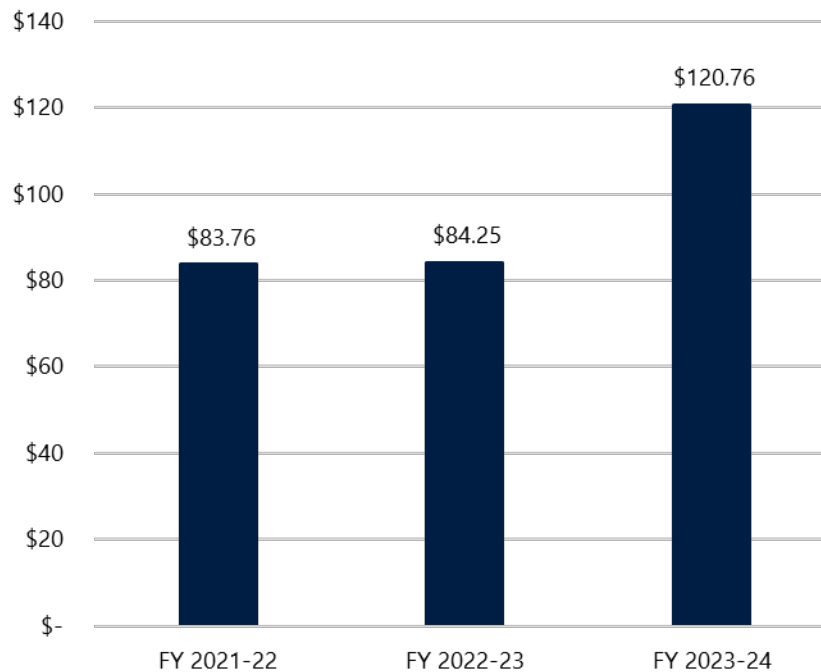
We found that from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, the Fish Fund revenues increased from \$3.98 to \$5.57 per capita in constant dollars, a 39.9

²¹ Annual resident licenses were sold the most out of all fishing licenses from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, over sixty percent of the total number of fishing licenses sold each year were comprised of annual resident licenses.

percent increase. The revenue per capita also increased in FY 2022-23, which rose 1.7 percent from FY 2021-22.

Exhibit 26

Fish Fund Revenue per License (in Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the Fish Fund revenues per license increased from \$83.76 per license to \$84.25 per license in constant dollars, a 0.6 percent increase. However, from FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, that figure rose from \$84.25 to \$120.76, a 43.3 percent increase. There was a 44.2 percent increase from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24.

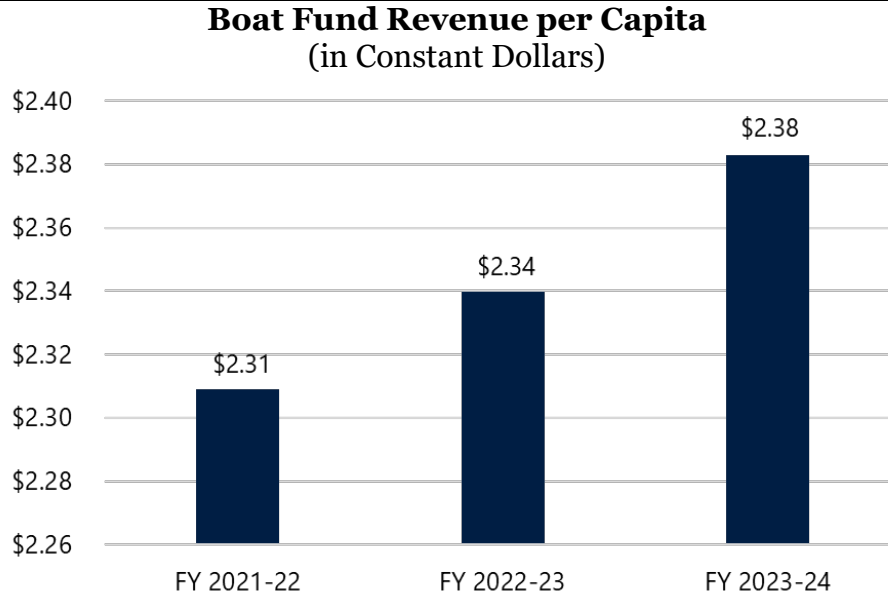
In FY 2023-24, the PFBC received a one-time settlement of \$15.3 million from Monsanto. If this amount is removed from total revenues for that year, Fish Fund revenues per license would decrease to \$95.12 per license, a 12.9 percent increase from FY 2022-23.

Due to the increase in per capita and per license revenues, we anticipate that the PFBC will be able to sustain its existing service levels.

Boat Fund Revenues per Capita and per Registration. We computed the Boat Fund revenues per capita

and per boat registration. Exhibits 27 and 28 show these computations by fiscal year.

Exhibit 27

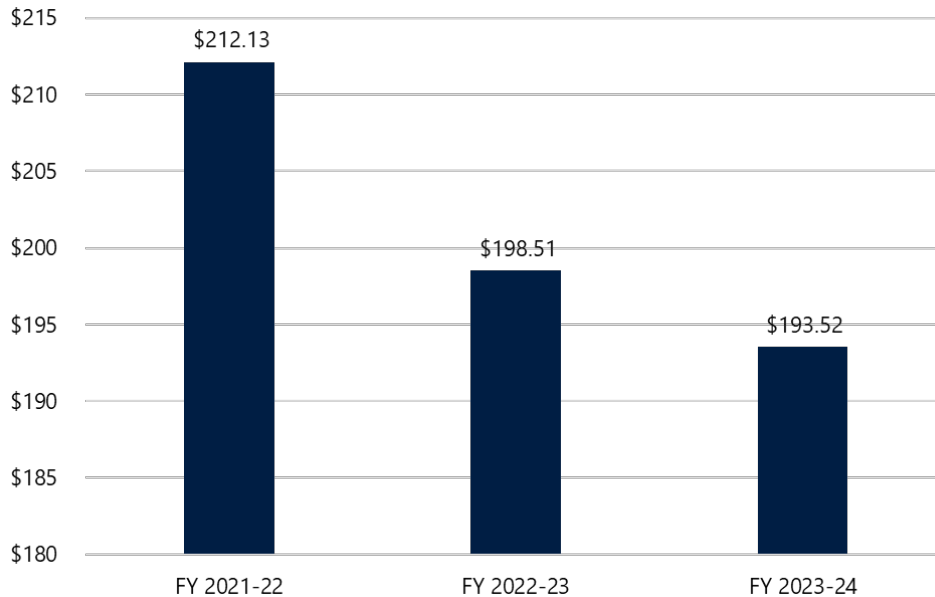


Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

We found that the Boat Fund revenue per capita remained consistent throughout our audit period, increasing by less than \$0.10 each fiscal year from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. Specifically, the Boat Fund revenue per capita rose from \$2.31 per capita in FY 2021-22 to \$2.34 per capita in FY 2022-23, a 1.3 percent increase. From FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, that figure increased by 1.8 percent to \$2.38 per capita.

Exhibit 28

Boat Fund Revenue per Registration (in Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the Boat Fund revenue per registration declined from \$212.13 to \$198.51 per registration, a 6.4 percent decrease. During this period, total Boat Fund revenue did not increase at the same rate as total boat registrations. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the total boat registrations increased by 7.9 percent, while the total Boat Fund revenue increased by only one percent. The Boat Fund revenue per registration trend continued to decline in FY 2023-24, reaching \$193.52 per registration, or a 2.5 percent decrease from FY 2022-23.

Revenues per capita remain consistent, but revenues per registration have declined over the scope of this audit, albeit not by much, 8.8 percent. However, if this trend continues, it may impact the PFBC's ability to provide boating services at current levels. As noted above, the Boat Fund experienced a deficit in FY 2023-24.

Expenditure per Capita and License/ Registration

Expenditures per capita and per license reflect changes in spending relative to Pennsylvania's population and license holders. As the population or number of licenses increases, it would be reasonable to expect the need for services to increase proportionally. Therefore, the

level of expenditures per capita and per license should ideally remain consistent in real terms unless PFBC adds new programs or services.

However, an increase in expenditure per capita may indicate that the cost of providing services exceeds the public's ability to pay. If the increase in spending is greater than expected from continued inflation and cannot be explained by the addition of new services, it can be an indicator of declining productivity, where the PFBC is spending more to support the same level of services and operations.

Formulas.

Expenditure per Capita:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Pennsylvania Population}}$$

Expenditure per License (Fish Fund-specific):²²

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Annual Resident Licenses}}$$

Expenditure per Registration (Boat Fund-specific):

$$\frac{\text{Expenditure}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Total Boat Registrations}}$$

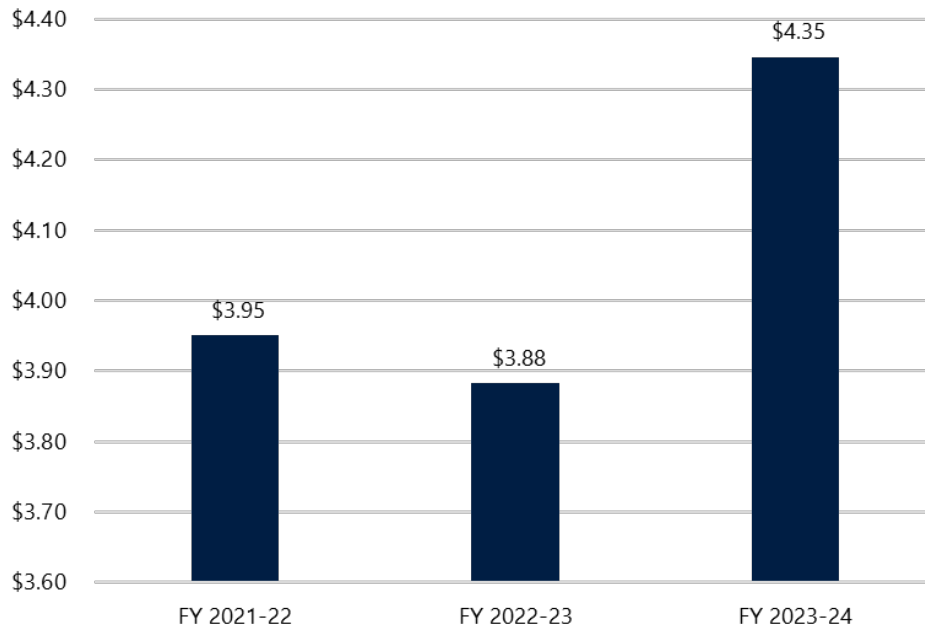
Fish Fund Expenditures per Capita and per License.

We computed the Fish Fund expenditures per capita and per license using the formula identified at the beginning of this section. Exhibits 29 and 30 show our calculations by fiscal year.

²² Annual resident licenses were sold the most out of all fishing licenses from FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, over sixty percent of the total number of fishing licenses sold were comprised of annual resident licenses.

Exhibit 29

Fish Fund Expenditure per Capita
(in Constant Dollars)

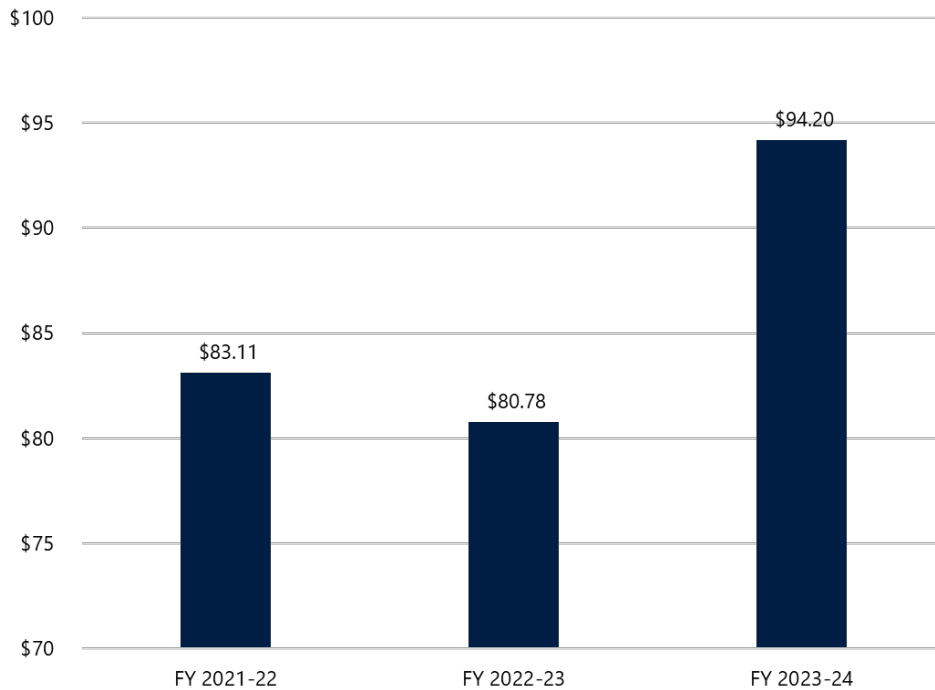


Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the Fish Fund expenditures per capita declined from \$3.95 to \$3.88, a 1.7 percent decrease. However, in FY 2023-24, that figure rose to \$4.35 per capita.

Exhibit 30

Fish Fund Expenditure per License
(in Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

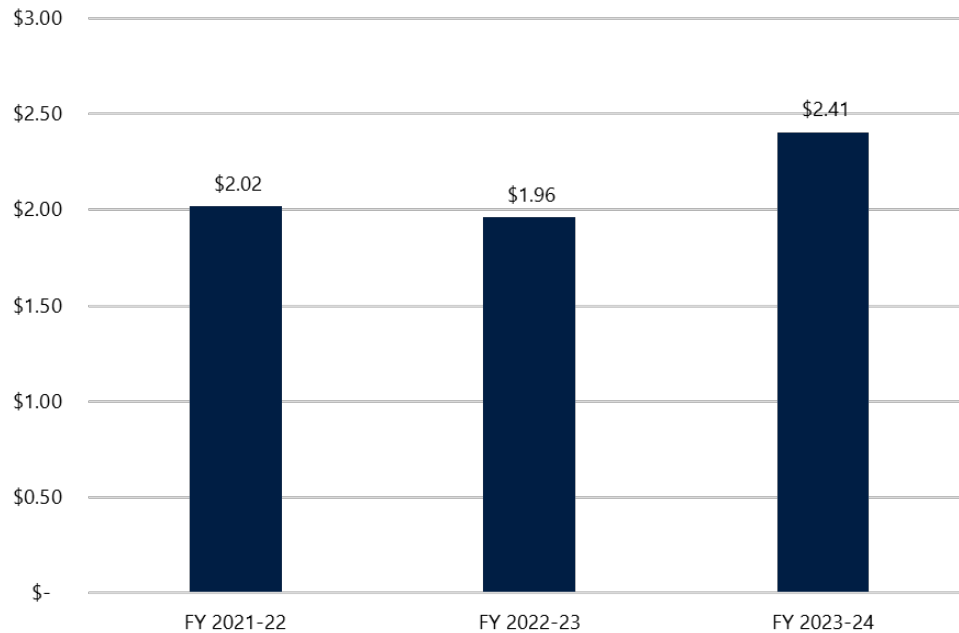
From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the fish fund expenditure per license declined from \$83.11 to \$80.78 in constant dollars, a 2.8 percent decrease. From FY 2022-23 to FY 2023-24, that figure increased to \$94.20 per license in constant dollars, a 16.6 percent increase from FY 2022-23.

Increased per capita and per license spending may impact the PFBC's ability to maintain or expand its existing service levels and/or operational limits. However, as noted above, the increased spending may be indicative of the \$15 million that the PFBC received in the Monsanto settlement.

Boat Fund Expenditures per Capita and per Registration. We computed the Boat Fund expenditures per capita and per boat registration using the formula we identified at the beginning of this section. Exhibits 31 and 32 show these computations by fiscal year.

Exhibit 31

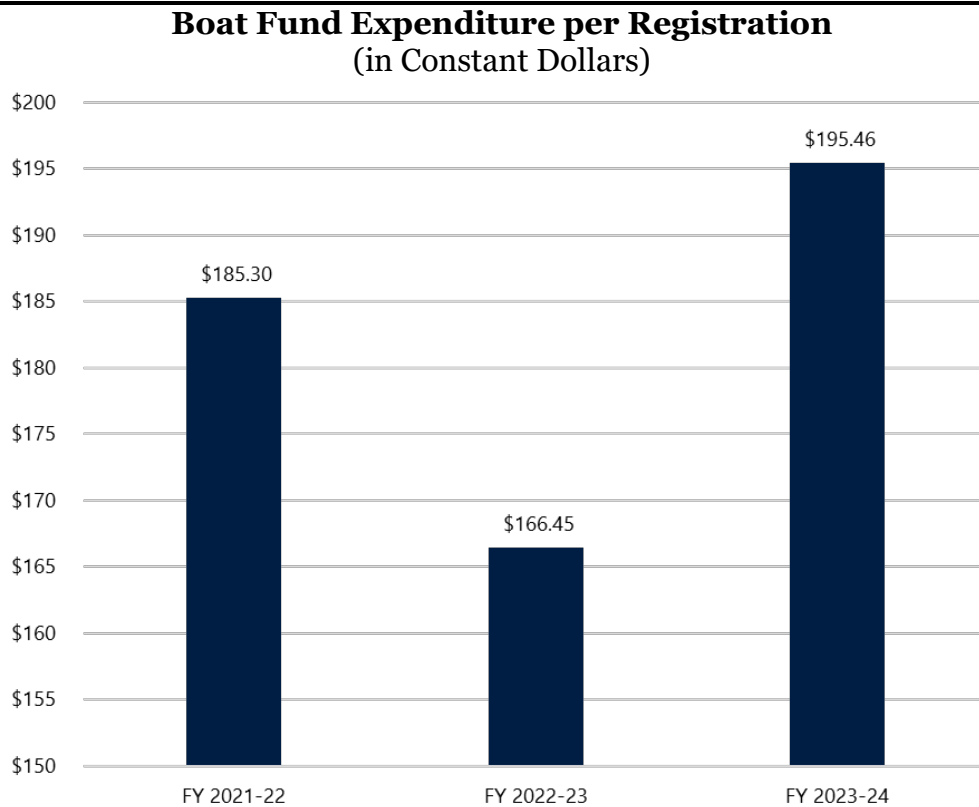
Boat Fund Expenditure per Capita
(in Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

The Boat Fund expenditures per capita exhibited a similar pattern to that found in our analysis of the Fish Fund expenditures per capita. Specifically, from FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, the Boat Fund expenditures per capita declined from \$2.02 to \$1.96, a 2.7 percent decrease. However, in FY 2023-24, the figure reached \$2.41 per capita, a 22.7 percent increase from FY 2022-23. This means that the PFBC had higher spending per capita via the Boat Fund in FY 2023-24 than in FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23, which could indicate rising costs of its activities or programs tied to the Boat Fund.

Exhibit 32



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

We found that Boat Fund expenditures per registration in FY 2023-24 had also increased since FY 2021-22. From FY 2021-22 to FY 2022-23, Boat Fund expenditures per registration decreased from \$185.30 per registration to \$166.45 per registration, a 10.2 percent decline. In FY 2023-24, that figure rose to \$195.46 per registration, a 17.4 percent increase from FY 2022-23.

From a broader standpoint, the trends we examined in this section illustrate that while the PFBC had generated more revenue per capita for both the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund in FY 2023-24 than in FY 2021-22, the expenditures per capita had also increased. While this may indicate the PFBC's increased capacity or ability to expand its revenue generation efforts, it may also suggest that there are increasing costs or declining efficiency in the agency's ability to meet its service levels.

This page was intentionally left blank.

SECTION III LICENSE AND REGISTRATION SYSTEMS



Fast Facts

- ❖ *In FY 2023-24, PFBC sold over 767,000 fishing licenses to anglers of Pennsylvania waterways.*
- ❖ *In FY 2023-24, PFBC issued roughly 160,000 boat registrations, 147,000 launch permits, and 38,000 boat titles.*
- ❖ *In 2024, almost 40 percent of all Pennsylvania fishing licenses were sold online via HuntFishPA.*

Fishing and boating activities are important to Pennsylvania's economy. The US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis estimated that boating and fishing activities added approximately \$844 million to the state's economy in 2023, an added economic value ranked 17th nationwide.

The systems that Pennsylvanians use to purchase fishing and boating-related licenses, permits, and registrations must be functional and reliable. Ensuring the effectiveness of PFBC's service delivery platforms is essential for user satisfaction and maintaining revenue streams that support conservation and outdoor recreation programs in the commonwealth.

This section of our audit reviews whether the fishing and boating license and registration processes are effective for the PFBC and consumers.

Key Findings

1. PFBC jointly contracts the software company TylerTechnologies with the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) to implement and maintain the online sales platform HuntFishPA.
2. PFBC notes several "peak times" when the demand for fishing and boating products is highest.
3. For selected metrics, 79 percent of unmet service levels for HuntFishPA were in months with peak demand for fishing and/or boating products.
4. The HuntFishPA System Availability metric did not meet expected service levels in four months within our scope.
5. The HuntFishPA Session Response Time metric did not meet expected service levels in ten months within our scope.
6. The HuntFishPA First Contact metric did not meet expected service levels in 15 months within our scope.

7. The HuntFishPA Time to Resolve (Level 1) metric met all expected service levels within our scope.
8. The HuntFishPA Time to Resolve (Level 2) metric met all expected service levels within our scope.
9. PFBC does not use performance benchmarks for its boat registration application processing or customer support metrics.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, specifically during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the Session Response Time metric in HuntFishPA to incentivize desired system performance.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, particularly during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the First Contact HuntFishPA metric to incentivize desired system performance.

Recommendation: The PFBC should investigate how to improve its boat registration processing time to reduce backlogs.

Recommendation: The PFBC should develop specific and measurable benchmarks for boat registration application processing and customer support metrics to better track and improve the DLAR's boat registration processing and customer support functions.

A. Fishing Licenses and Permits

The PA Fish and Boat Code requires individuals 16 or older to procure a license to fish in public Pennsylvania waters. The PFBC is responsible for issuing Pennsylvania residents, nonresidents, and tourists fishing licenses. In 2024, the PFBC sold over 767,000 fishing licenses to anglers in Pennsylvania waterways. Anglers must carry a fishing license, either in digital or print form, and present it upon request from a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) while fishing.

A fishing permit is required to fish for some species or in certain locations. All anglers need a license, but not all anglers need a permit.

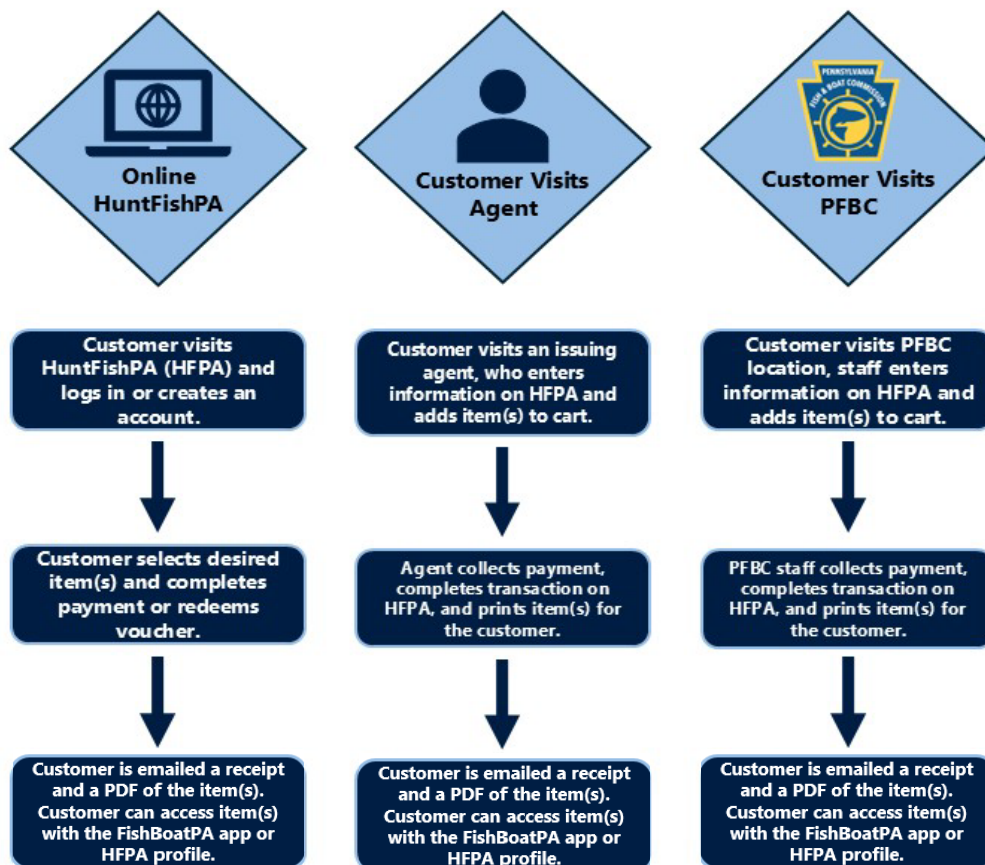
Individuals can purchase various types of fishing licenses and permits, depending on their eligibility and specific needs. These include, but are not limited to:

- Resident Fishing License.²³
- Three-, five-, and 10-Year Resident Fishing Licenses.
- Non-Resident PA Student Fishing License.
- Trout Permit.
- Lake Erie Permit.

Fishing licenses and permits may be purchased online or by visiting a licensing agent or the PFBC. Exhibit 33 shows the ways anglers can purchase fishing licenses and permits.

Exhibit 33

Fishing License and Permit Sales Flowchart



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

²³ Any license or permit without a defined length is an annual license.

B. HuntFishPA

PFBC and the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) use the HuntFishPA website as their online licensing and permitting platform. Since 2021, both organizations have operated under a single contractual agreement with Tyler Technologies, Inc., which spans 10 years to develop and maintain HuntFishPA.

PFBC offers various fishing and boating products on HuntFishPA, including:

- Fishing Licenses and Permits.
- Boating Launch Permits.
- Boat Registration Renewals.
- Vouchers.²⁴

Online transactions comprise a significant portion of license and permit sales. Exhibit 34 shows the percentage of total license sales by transaction type.

Exhibit 34

License, Permit, and Voucher Sales by Transaction Type

Product Type	HHPA Sold %	Agent Sold %	PFBC Sold %
FY 2021-22			
Fishing Licenses	35.8%	64.1%	0.1%
Fishing Permits	31.1	68.8	0.1
Launch Permit	52.8	46.2	1.0
Vouchers	61.4	38.4	0.2
FY 2022-23			
Fishing Licenses	37.7	62.1	0.2
Fishing Permits	32.7	67.1	0.2
Launch Permit	56.0	43.0	1.0
Vouchers	63.5	36.3	0.1
FY 2023-24			
Fishing Licenses	39.6	60.3	0.2
Fishing Permits	34.0	65.8	0.2
Launch Permit	58.5	40.7	0.9
Vouchers	85.2	14.6	0.2

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

²⁴ A voucher may be purchased as a gift for another individual and used to obtain a fishing license or permit. A voucher can only be redeemed for the specific product and year for which the voucher was purchased.

In FY 2023-24, almost 40 percent of fishing license sales came from online transactions via HuntFishPA. Similarly, customers used HuntFishPA to purchase one-third of fishing permits and 58 percent of launch permits in the same year. PFBC also indicated that auto-renewals, a feature offered exclusively on the HuntFishPA website, have become more popular. Since 2021, the number of auto-renewed licenses and permits increased by 114 percent, reaching 33,968 in 2024.

PFBC has spent approximately \$1.5 million per year in fiscal years 2021-22 to 2023-24 on system maintenance and upkeep services from TylerTechnologies, Inc. Ensuring that contracted entities comply with established performance levels and carry out critical functions is essential when PFBC uses public funds to purchase these services.

HuntFishPA Service Level Agreement and Performance Indicators

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a contract between a service provider and a customer that defines the service and expected performance level. It also describes how the customer will measure and approve performance. PFBC has an SLA with TylerTechnologies, Inc. for HuntFishPA that defines the metrics to be collected, how they will be collected, and the expected level of service for each metric. The SLA also details the financial penalties to TylerTechnologies, Inc. for unmet service levels.

Exhibit 35 shows the selected performance indicators within the SLA between PFBC and TylerTechnologies, Inc. to assess the HuntFishPA platform.

Exhibit 35

HuntFishPA SLA Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Definition	Service Level Requirement	Calculation
System Operations Maintenance/Service Delivery			
System Availability	Percentage of total time that the HuntFishPA system is available to customers.	The system is available for 99.9% of Available Production Minutes. ^{a/}	Minutes System is Available / Available Production Minutes.
Session Response Time	Number of seconds between a customer's action on HuntFishPA and the appropriate response.	99% of session responses occur within five seconds.	Number of Session Responses Within Five Seconds / Total Number of Session Responses
Help Desk Support			
First Contact	Percentage of calls answered within two minutes of reaching the customer support queue.	90% of calls reaching the queue are answered by help desk support staff within two minutes.	Number of calls reaching the queue that are answered within two minutes / Total number of calls reaching the queue.
Time to Resolve (Level 1)	Elapsed time between first contact with a customer and resolution of an issue, or the call is escalated to Level 2.	95% of issues from answered calls are resolved within 30 minutes of the call being placed.	Number of Level 1 calls resolved within 30 minutes / Total number of answered calls.
Time to Resolve (Level 2)	Elapsed time between first contact with a customer and resolution of an issue. These are more intensive issues with a resolution expected in days instead of minutes.	90% of Level 2 issues from answered calls are resolved within five business days of the call being placed.	Number of Level 2 calls resolved within five business days / Total number of Level 2 calls.

^{a/} Available Production Minutes are the total number of minutes in a month minus the number of minutes for approved system downtime for scheduled maintenance.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

HuntFishPA Performance Analysis

To assess HuntFishPA's effectiveness, we compared the performance of various metrics to the expected service level outlined in the PFBC's SLA. We note that the demand for fishing and boating products is higher

during certain times of the year. Higher demand for fishing and boating products leads to increased traffic to the HuntFishPA website and may impact performance. The PFBC's SLA includes increased financial penalties for unmet expected service levels during peak times.

PFBC indicated the following periods as "peak times":

- The peak of fishing product demand is from the Thursday before Mentored Youth Trout Day to the second Sunday after the Statewide Trout Opener. For the 2025 season, this peak time fell on:
 - March 27 – April 13, 2025.
- The peak of boating registrations and launch permit demand is around Memorial Day and Independence Day, from the Thursday before each holiday to two days after Memorial Day and three days after Independence Day. For the 2025 boating season, these peak times fell on:
 - May 22 – May 28, 2025.
 - June 26 – July 7, 2025.

We evaluated two categories of metrics: System Operations Maintenance/Service Delivery and Help Desk Support.

System Operations Maintenance/Service Delivery Metrics. These metrics focus on the performance, stability, and reliability of the HuntFishPA infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms by tracking system availability, uptime, and session response times.

The first section of Exhibit 36 shows the HuntFishPA platform's system availability by month; the second section segregates the three months that did not meet availability standards outlined in the SLA.

Exhibit 36

HuntFishPA System Availability by Month

FY 2021-22	HuntFishPA Availability SLA Met %	FY 2022-23	HuntFishPA Availability SLA Met %	FY 2023-24	HuntFishPA Availability SLA Met %
Expected Service Level: 99.9%					
Jul-21	100.0%	Jul-22	100.0%	Jul-23	99.9%
Aug-21	100.0	Aug-22	100.0	Aug-23	100.0
Sep-21	100.0	Sep-22	99.9	Sep-23	100.0
Oct-21	100.0	Oct-22	100.0	Oct-23	100.0
Nov-21	100.0	Nov-22	100.0	Nov-23	100.0
Dec-21	100.0	Dec-22	100.0	Dec-23	99.9
Jan-22	100.0	Jan-23	99.9	Jan-24	100.0
Feb-22	100.0	Feb-23	100.0	Feb-24	99.5
Mar-22	100.0	Mar-23	100.0	Mar-24	100.0
Apr-22	100.0	Apr-23	99.6	Apr-24	100.0
May-22	99.9	May-23	100.0	May-24	100.0
Jun-22	99.7	Jun-23	99.7	Jun-24	100.0

HuntFishPA System Downtime

Month	HuntFishPA Availability SLA Met %	Downtime (Minutes)
Jun-22	99.7%	133
Apr-23	99.6	163
Jun-23	99.7	146
Feb-24	99.5	210

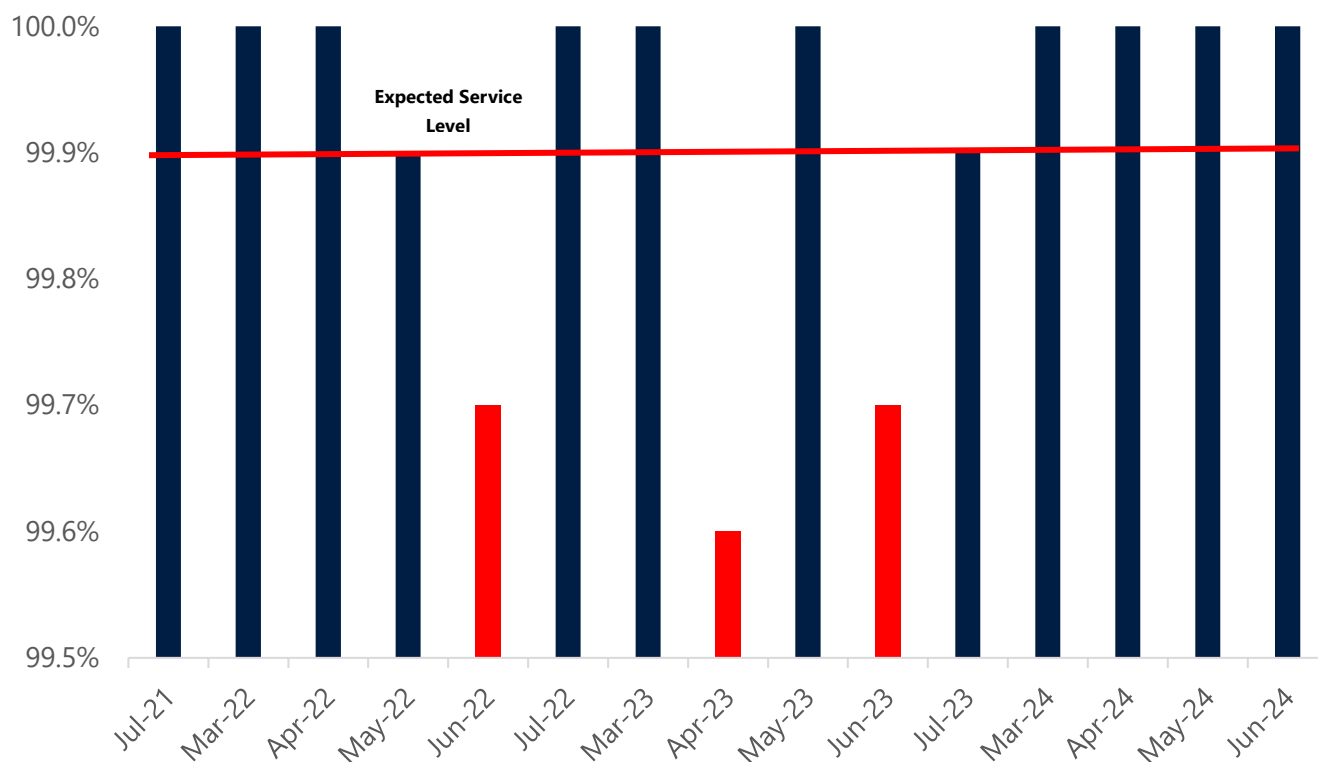
Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

HuntFishPA's system availability performance fell below expected service levels in four months: June 2022, April 2023, June 2023, and February 2024. During these months, the HuntFishPA platform was unavailable for an average of 163 minutes per month, or roughly 2.7 hours.

To account for increased demand, Exhibit 37 shows the HuntFishPA platform's system availability during months with peak fishing and boating product demand since HuntFishPA offers both types of products. Three of the four months when the expected service level for System Availability was unmet were during peak times.

Exhibit 37

HuntFishPA System Availability in Months with Peak Times



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Of the 36 months of our scope, the expected service level of 99.9 percent system uptime outlined in the PFBC and TylerTechnologies, Inc. contract was unmet in four months. The most significant discrepancy between service level and system performance was half a percentage point in February 2024.

Additionally, three of the four months when the expected service level was not met were peak time months, with increased site traffic and system workload, potentially contributing to shortfalls in performance.

Exhibit 38 shows the HuntFishPA platform's session response time by month. HuntFishPA's session response performance fell below expected service levels in 10 months: January, February, March, April, and May of 2022, September, and June of 2023, and July, September, and October of 2024.

Exhibit 38

HuntFishPA Session Response Time by Month^{a/}

FY 2021-22	Response Time SLA Met %	FY 2022-23	Response Time SLA Met %	FY 2023-24	Response Time SLA Met %
Expected Service Level: 99%					
Jul-21	N/A	Jul-22	99%	Jul-23	98%
Aug-21	N/A	Aug-22	99	Aug-23	99
Sep-21	N/A	Sep-22	98	Sep-23	98
Oct-21	N/A	Oct-22	99	Oct-23	99
Nov-21	N/A	Nov-22	99	Nov-23	99
Dec-21	N/A	Dec-22	99	Dec-23	99
Jan-22	98%	Jan-23	99	Jan-24	99
Feb-22	98	Feb-23	99	Feb-24	99
Mar-22	94	Mar-23	N/A	Mar-24	99
Apr-22	96	Apr-23	100	Apr-24	99
May-22	98	May-23	99	May-24	99
Jun-22	99	Jun-23	97	Jun-24	98

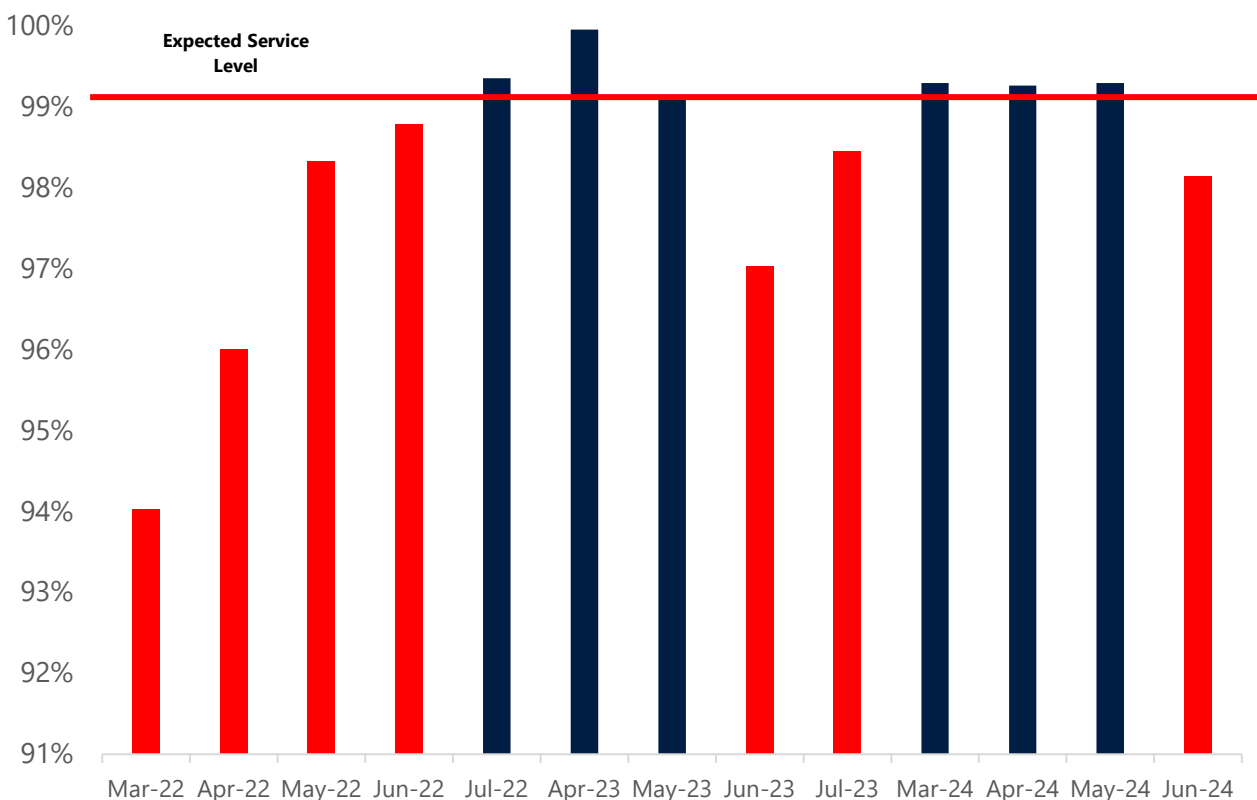
^{a/} PBFC implemented the Session Response Time metric in January 2022. In April 2023, TylerTechnologies, Inc. transitioned to a new data reporting system, resulting in data loss for March 2023.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

To account for increased demand, Exhibit 39 shows the HuntFishPA platform's session response time in months with peak fishing and boating product demand, since HuntFishPA offers both types of products. The demand for fishing and boating products was at its highest in seven of the 10 months when the expected service level for Session Response Time was not met.

Exhibit 39

HuntFishPA Session Response Time in Months with Peak Times^{a/}



^{a/} July 2021 and March 2023 were removed due to unavailable data. PBFC implemented the Session Response Time metric in January 2022. In April 2023, TylerTechnologies, Inc. transitioned to a new data reporting system, resulting in data loss for March 2023.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Of the 36 months of our scope, the expected service level of 99 percent outlined in the PFBC and TylerTechnologies, Inc. contract was unmet in 10 months, or roughly a third of all months. The largest disparity between expected service level and system performance was five percentage points in March 2022.

There could be several potential causes for the disparities in performance. Seven of the ten months when the Session Response Time expected service level was unmet were during peak times. Increased site traffic and system workload could have contributed to shortfalls in performance during these months. The financial penalties for unmet service levels may not be significant enough to incentivize the desired performance. Currently, monetary penalties for TylerTechnologies, Inc. for the Session Response Time metric are \$2,500 for non-peak months and \$10,000 during peak months.

Significant deficiencies in performance concerning the Session Response Time metric may suggest various underlying issues that directly impact HuntFishPA's overall effectiveness and customer experience. When system response times lag, users may experience frustration, particularly during periods of high demand. This can lead to incomplete transactions, customer dissatisfaction, and increased reliance on customer support services to resolve issues that stem from system delays rather than user error.

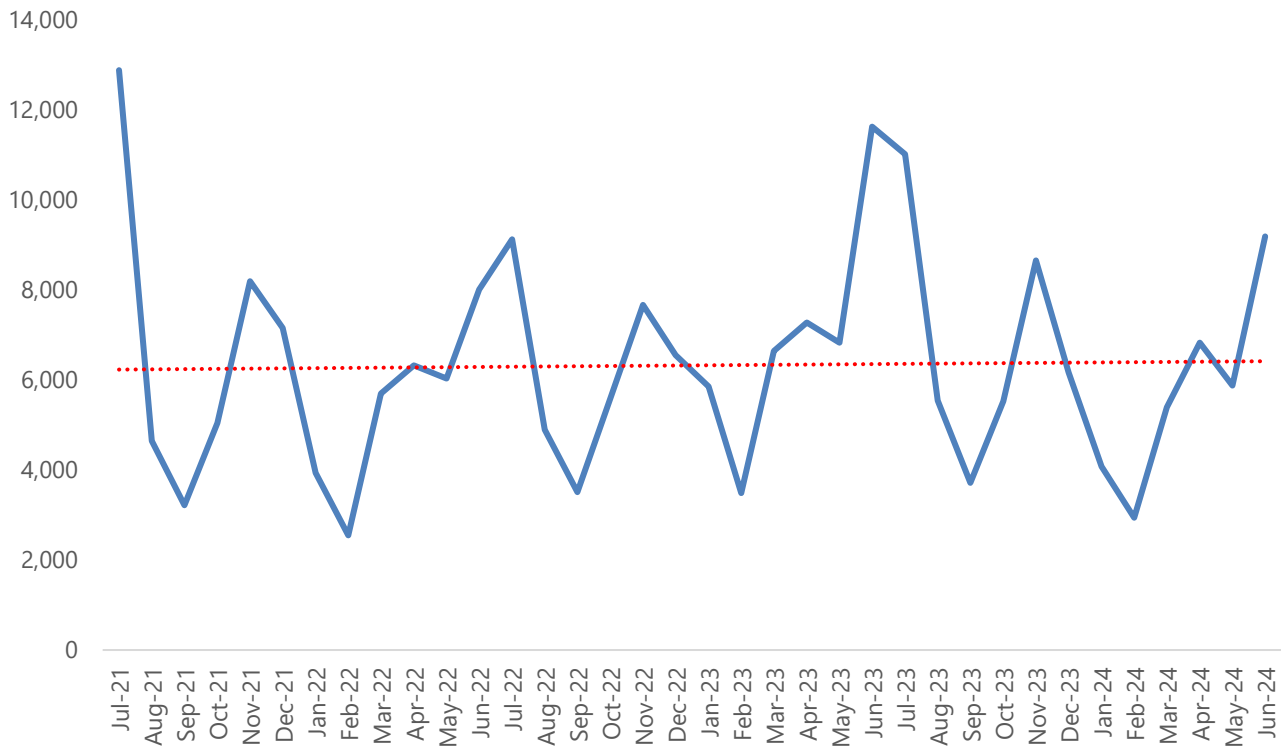
Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, specifically during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the Session Response Time metric in HuntFishPA to incentivize desired system performance.

Help Desk Support Metrics. These indicators measure how quickly support teams resolve user issues and handle inquiries throughout the support process.

Exhibit 40 shows the HuntFishPA platform's total customer support calls by month.

Exhibit 40

HuntFishPA Customer Support Calls



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

HuntFishPA customer support receives an average of 6,327 customer support calls per month. In months with peak times, the average increases to 7,920, or 25 percent.

Exhibit 41 shows the HuntFishPA platform's customer support first contact rate by month. HuntFishPA's customer support first contact performance fell below expected service levels in 15 months: March, April, May, June, and July of 2022, March, April, May, June, July, August, and November of 2023, and March, April, and June of 2024.

Exhibit 41

HuntFishPA Customer Support First Contact by Month

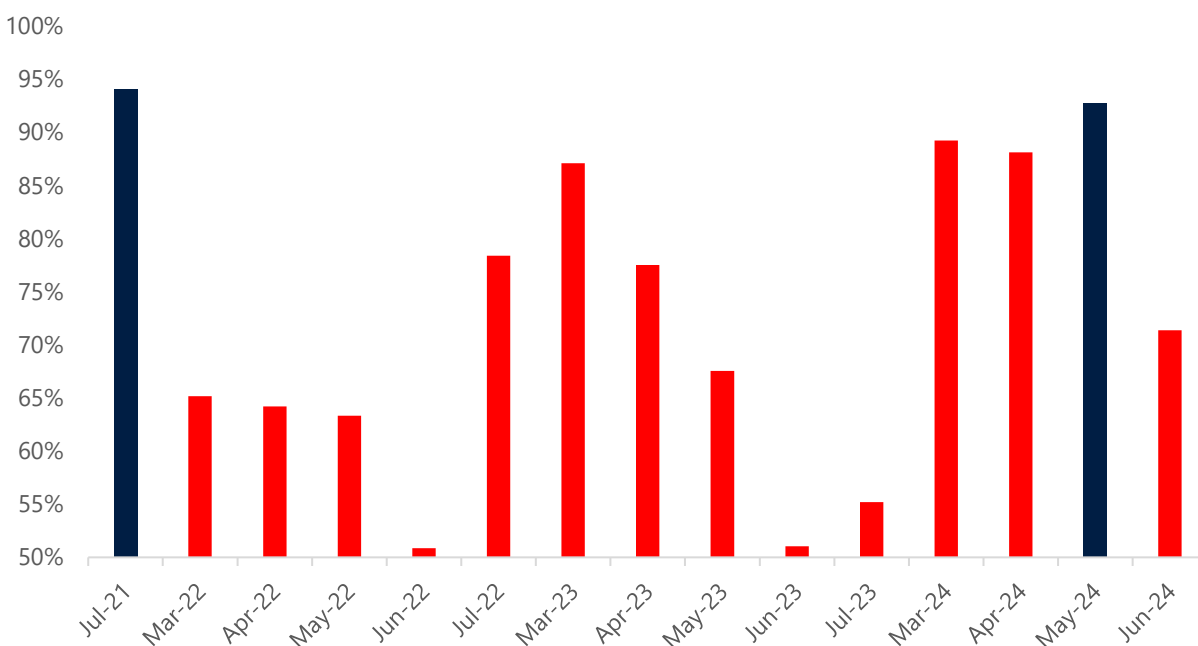
FY 2021-22	First Contact SLA Met %	FY 2022-23	First Contact SLA Met %	FY 2023-24	First Contact SLA Met %
Expected Service Level: 90%					
Jul-21	94%	Jul-22	78%	Jul-23	55%
Aug-21	96	Aug-22	96	Aug-23	81
Sep-21	95	Sep-22	92	Sep-23	95
Oct-21	93	Oct-22	96	Oct-23	95
Nov-21	90	Nov-22	94	Nov-23	88
Dec-21	93	Dec-22	93	Dec-23	93
Jan-22	93	Jan-23	91	Jan-24	98
Feb-22	97	Feb-23	94	Feb-24	97
Mar-22	65	Mar-23	87	Mar-24	89
Apr-22	64	Apr-23	78	Apr-24	88
May-22	63	May-23	68	May-24	93
Jun-22	51	Jun-23	51	Jun-24	71

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

To account for increased demand, Exhibit 42 shows the HuntFishPA platform's customer support first contact rate in months with peak fishing and boating product demand, since HuntFishPA offers both types of products. Thirteen of the 15 months, or roughly 87 percent, when the expected service level for First Contact was unmet were during peak times.

Exhibit 42

HuntFishPA Customer Support First Contact in Months with Peak Times



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Of the 36 months of our scope, the expected service level of 90 percent outlined in the PFBC and TylerTechnologies, Inc. contract was unmet in 15 months. The largest disparity between expected service level and performance was 39 percentage points in June 2022 and 2023.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, particularly during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the First Contact HuntFishPA metric to incentivize desired system performance.

Exhibit 43 shows the HuntFishPA platform's customer support Time to Resolve (Level 1) by month. HuntFishPA's customer support Time to Resolve (Level 1) performance did not fall below expected service levels.

Exhibit 43

HuntFishPA Customer Support Time to Resolve (Level 1) by Month

FY 2021-22	Time to Resolve Level 1 SLA Met %	FY 2022-23	Time to Resolve Level 1 SLA Met %	FY 2023-24	Time to Resolve Level 1 SLA Met %
Expected Service Level: 95%					
Jul-21	99%	Jul-22	98%	Jul-23	99%
Aug-21	99	Aug-22	99	Aug-23	99
Sep-21	99	Sep-22	99	Sep-23	99
Oct-21	99	Oct-22	99	Oct-23	99
Nov-21	100	Nov-22	99	Nov-23	99
Dec-21	100	Dec-22	99	Dec-23	99
Jan-22	99	Jan-23	99	Jan-24	99
Feb-22	99	Feb-23	99	Feb-24	99
Mar-22	99	Mar-23	99	Mar-24	99
Apr-22	98	Apr-23	99	Apr-24	99
May-22	99	May-23	99	May-24	99
Jun-22	98	Jun-23	99	Jun-24	99

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Exhibit 44 shows the HuntFishPA platform's customer support Time to Resolve (Level 2) by month. HuntFishPA's customer support Time to Resolve (Level 2) performance did not fall below expected service levels. This is likely due to the smaller number of Level 2 customer support requests, with an average of 113 Level 2 tickets created during our scope.

Exhibit 44

HuntFishPA Customer Support Time to Resolve (Level 2) by Month

FY 2021-22	Time to Resolve Level 2 SLA Met %	FY 2022-23	Time to Resolve Level 2 SLA Met %	FY 2023-24	Time to Resolve Level 2 SLA Met %
Expected Service Level: 90%					
Jul-21	96%	Jul-22	99%	Jul-23	98%
Aug-21	99	Aug-22	100	Aug-23	100
Sep-21	99	Sep-22	100	Sep-23	100
Oct-21	95	Oct-22	100	Oct-23	100
Nov-21	99	Nov-22	100	Nov-23	100
Dec-21	95	Dec-22	100	Dec-23	96
Jan-22	97	Jan-23	100	Jan-24	100
Feb-22	100	Feb-23	100	Feb-24	97
Mar-22	95	Mar-23	99	Mar-24	100
Apr-22	96	Apr-23	99	Apr-24	97
May-22	97	May-23	100	May-24	100
Jun-22	98	Jun-23	97	Jun-24	100

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

C. Boat Registrations

The PFBC administers boat registrations, launch permits, and titles for all boats in which Pennsylvania is the state of principal operation per the PA Fish and Boat Code.²⁵ In FY 2023-24, PFBC issued roughly 160,000 boat registrations and 38,000 boat titles.

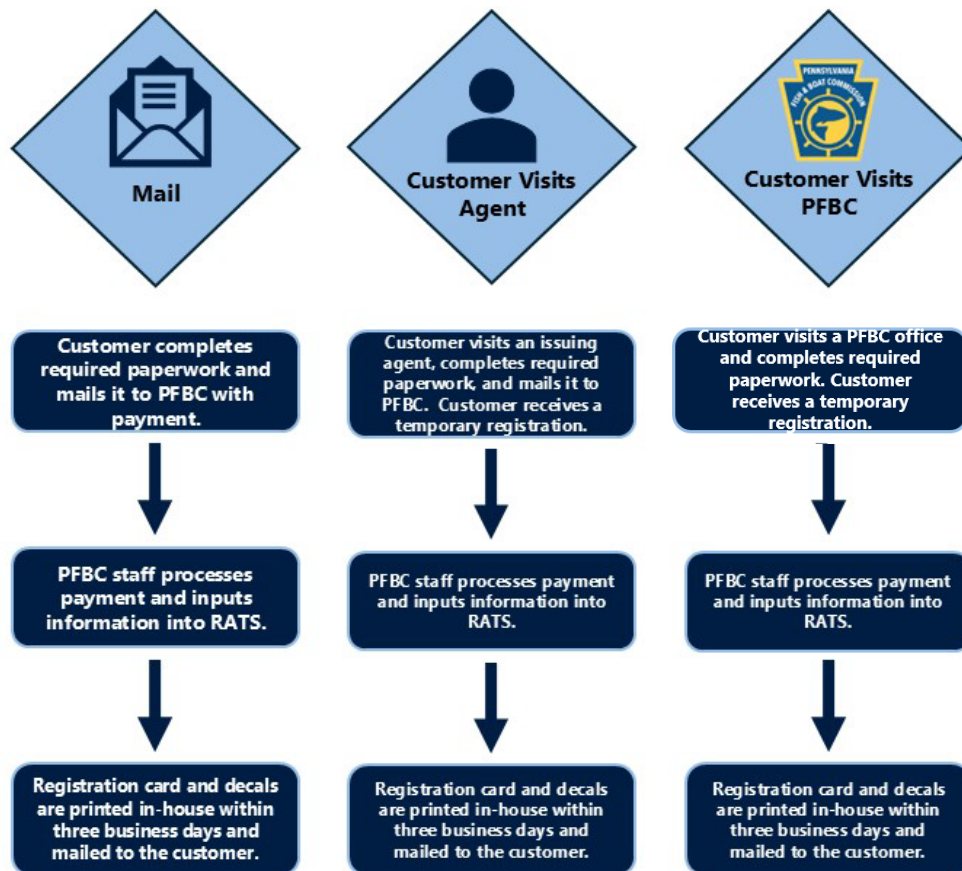
Exhibit 45 shows the ways individuals can initially register their boats. For renewals, boat owners can visit an agent, the PFBC, or do so online on the HuntFishPA website.²⁶

²⁵ The state of principal operation is the state where a boat is on its waters more than on any other state's waters. This time includes the time when the boat is not in motion, such as when the boat is moored or at anchor.

²⁶ Per 58 Pa. Code § 93.14, individuals must initially register a boat by completing the REV-336 paper form.

Exhibit 45

Initial Boat Registration Flowchart



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

An applicant for initial registration must establish proof of ownership by providing one of the following:

- **Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin:** Required for boats manufactured after January 1, 1993, showing ownership transfer from the manufacturer, distributor, or dealer.
- **Bill of Sale or Invoice:** Required for boats manufactured before January 1, 1993, or if no certificate of origin is available; must include seller, buyer, legal owner info, and boat details with the hull or serial number.
- **Out-of-State Title Document:** Required for boats previously registered and titled in another state, properly endorsed to indicate transfer.

If none of these documents are available, the applicant must complete an Affidavit of Purchase/Ownership (PFBC-734 form).²⁷

Registration and Titling System (RATS) Overview

RATS is the internal application that PFBC uses to store information regarding boat registrations and titles, including but not limited to:

- Owner Information (name, address, e-mail address, DOB).
- Vessel Information (boat type, fuel type, boat make and model, hull material).
- Title and Registration Information (registration/title number, issue date, title status, original issue date).

The Division of Licensing and Registrations (DLAR) within the PFBC's Bureau of Administration is responsible for processing boat registrations and customer support for the PFBC. Exhibit 46 shows the performance indicators we used to evaluate the boat registration processes and RATS.

Exhibit 46

RATS Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	Definition
System Efficiency	
Boat Registration Applications Processed	The number of boat registration applications processed in one day
Boat Registration Application Backlog	The number of boat registration applications that were not processed and added to the backlog. DLAR adds an application to the backlog if it is not processed on the same day it is received.
Customer Support	
DLAR Boat Registration Calls	The number of customer support calls placed to DLAR regarding boat registrations.
DLAR Average Talk Time	Average minutes spent speaking to customers regarding support issues.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

²⁷ Boat owners use the PFBC-734 form to establish ownership of boats purchased at flea markets, yard/garage sales, auction/estate sales, and other private transactions where a bill-of-sale or Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin is not available, and the boat was not previously registered in Pennsylvania or any other state.

RATS and Boat Registration Performance Analysis

To assess the effectiveness of RATS and the boat registration processes for both the PFBC and consumers, we used two types of metrics: System Efficiency and Customer Support.

System Efficiency. These metrics focus on boat registration performance, processing rate, and the size of registration backlogs.

Exhibit 47 shows the average number of boat registrations processed daily by month. The highest daily average was 215 in August 2022, and the lowest was 22 in January 2024.

Exhibit 47

DLAR Average Daily Boat Registrations Processed

FY 21-22	Processed	FY 22-23	Processed	FY 23-24	Processed
Jul-21	N/A	Jul-22	188	Jul-23	141
Aug-21	N/A	Aug-22	215	Aug-23	168
Sep-21	N/A	Sep-22	141	Sep-23	134
Oct-21	N/A	Oct-22	56	Oct-23	79
Nov-21	63	Nov-22	35	Nov-23	42
Dec-21	42	Dec-22	24	Dec-23	23
Jan-22	39	Jan-23	25	Jan-24	22
Feb-22	40	Feb-23	39	Feb-24	31
Mar-22	69	Mar-23	71	Mar-24	55
Apr-22	151	Apr-23	87	Apr-24	116
May-22	143	May-23	106	May-24	99
Jun-22	166	Jun-23	191	Jun-24	121

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Exhibit 48 shows the average number of backlogged boat registrations by month. The highest daily average was 3,828 in July 2022, and the lowest was 80 in January 2022. On average, significantly more boat registrations are backlogged than processed in a day, especially during months with peak times.

Exhibit 48

DLAR Average Daily Boat Registrations Backlogged

FY 2021-22	Backlog	FY 2022-23	Backlog	FY 2023-24	Backlog
Jul-21	N/A	Jul-22	3,828	Jul-23	3,755
Aug-21	N/A	Aug-22	1,631	Aug-23	3,565
Sep-21	N/A	Sep-22	547	Sep-23	2,292
Oct-21	N/A	Oct-22	245	Oct-23	504
Nov-21	147	Nov-22	204	Nov-23	308
Dec-21	155	Dec-22	277	Dec-23	234
Jan-22	80	Jan-23	332	Jan-24	304
Feb-22	122	Feb-23	582	Feb-24	500
Mar-22	496	Mar-23	745	Mar-24	885
Apr-22	649	Apr-23	1,053	Apr-24	882
May-22	598	May-23	2,174	May-24	1,557
Jun-22	1,810	Jun-23	3,049	Jun-24	3,122

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Exhibit 49 shows the ratio of average boat registrations processed and backlogged daily by month, representing the number of registrations processed for each registration placed on backlog. The highest ratio was 0.49 in January 2022, and the lowest was 0.04 in July 2023.

Despite low ratios and consistent backlogs, the PFBC processed almost all boat registration applications within the boat registration reporting period, which runs from November 1 to October 31 each year. On average, the PFBC processed 98.7 percent of all boat registration applications per reporting year.

Exhibit 49

DLAR Average Daily Boat Registrations Processed-Backlog Ratio

FY 2021-22	Processed-Backlog Ratio	FY 2022-23	Processed-Backlog Ratio	FY 2023-24	Processed-Backlog Ratio
Jul-21	N/A	Jul-22	0.05	Jul-23	0.04
Aug-21	N/A	Aug-22	0.13	Aug-23	0.05
Sep-21	N/A	Sep-22	0.26	Sep-23	0.06
Oct-21	N/A	Oct-22	0.23	Oct-23	0.16
Nov-21	0.43	Nov-22	0.17	Nov-23	0.14
Dec-21	0.27	Dec-22	0.09	Dec-23	0.10
Jan-22	0.49	Jan-23	0.08	Jan-24	0.07
Feb-22	0.33	Feb-23	0.07	Feb-24	0.06
Mar-22	0.14	Mar-23	0.10	Mar-24	0.06
Apr-22	0.23	Apr-23	0.08	Apr-24	0.13
May-22	0.24	May-23	0.05	May-24	0.06
Jun-22	0.09	Jun-23	0.06	Jun-24	0.04

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

The ratio could indicate that the PFBC is not processing registrations promptly, which could impact boaters' experience by limiting their ability to operate their boats with a proper registration when they wish to.

Recommendation: The PFBC should investigate how to improve its boat registration processing time to reduce backlogs.

Customer Support. These indicators measure the volume of customer support calls related to boat registrations and the time spent speaking with customers regarding support issues.

Exhibit 50 shows the average number of customer support calls related to boat registrations daily by month. The highest daily average was 126 in June 2023, and the lowest was 27 in November 2022.

Exhibit 50

DLAR Average Daily Boat Registration Customer Support Calls

FY 2021-22	Average Daily Boat Registration Calls	FY 2022-23	Average Daily Boat Registration Calls	FY 2023-24	Average Daily Boat Registration Calls
Jul-21	N/A	Jul-22	89	Jul-23	97
Aug-21	N/A	Aug-22	76	Aug-23	84
Sep-21	N/A	Sep-22	56	Sep-23	54
Oct-21	N/A	Oct-22	39	Oct-23	60
Nov-21	52	Nov-22	27	Nov-23	37
Dec-21	38	Dec-22	34	Dec-23	33
Jan-22	41	Jan-23	47	Jan-24	35
Feb-22	49	Feb-23	51	Feb-24	49
Mar-22	84	Mar-23	74	Mar-24	58
Apr-22	91	Apr-23	87	Apr-24	83
May-22	107	May-23	117	May-24	79
Jun-22	114	Jun-23	126	Jun-24	79

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Exhibit 51 shows the average time spent speaking with customers on support calls daily by month. The highest daily average was 7:05 in May 2024, and the lowest was 3:36 in November 2021.

Exhibit 51

DLAR Average Daily Customer Support Talk Time (Minutes and Seconds)

FY 2021-22	AVG Talk Time	FY 2022-23	AVG Talk Time	FY 2023-24	AVG Talk Time
Jul-21	4:48	Jul-22	4:33	Jul-23	4:48
Aug-21	5:20	Aug-22	4:19	Aug-23	5:12
Sep-21	4:54	Sep-22	4:10	Sep-23	5:11
Oct-21	5:09	Oct-22	4:14	Oct-23	4:56
Nov-21	3:36	Nov-22	4:37	Nov-23	5:07
Dec-21	5:04	Dec-22	4:07	Dec-23	6:26
Jan-22	4:48	Jan-23	4:48	Jan-24	6:22
Feb-22	4:46	Feb-23	4:35	Feb-24	5:58
Mar-22	4:49	Mar-23	4:36	Mar-24	6:00
Apr-22	4:57	Apr-23	4:48	Apr-24	6:11
May-22	4:57	May-23	5:14	May-24	7:05
Jun-22	4:57	Jun-23	5:13	Jun-24	6:41

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

While the PFBC does not have internal benchmarks related to customer support talk time, several customer support companies have estimated that the average talk time should be around six minutes.²⁸ Using this industry standard, the DLAR customer support is spending an acceptable amount of time speaking to customers regarding support issues, with the average talk time being roughly 5:05 for the 36 months we reviewed.

Although the PFBC incorporates application processing volume in evaluating its employees, it does not use any formalized benchmarks for the performance of boating registration processes or customer support processes.²⁹ This can lead to inefficiencies going unnoticed, prolonged processing times, and a lack of accountability for service delays.

Recommendation: The PFBC should develop specific and measurable benchmarks for boat registration application processing and customer support metrics to better track and improve the DLAR's boat registration processing and customer support functions.

²⁸ <https://www.zendesk.com/blog/average-handle-time/>, <https://www.talkdesk.com/blog/optimize-average-talk-time/>, <https://www.cmswire.com/customer-experience/how-call-center-analytics-drive-customer-satisfaction/>. Accessed May 12, 2025.

²⁹ PFBC indicated that it has application processing expectations for its employees, which are reflective of call center demands.

This page was intentionally left blank.

SECTION IV FISHING AND BOATING ACCESS POINTS



Fast Facts

- ❖ *There are 594 publicly available fishing and boating access points in Pennsylvania; 248 are owned and operated by PFBC.*
- ❖ *Erie County has the greatest number of access points with 79, followed by Crawford County with 31.*
- ❖ *During FYs 2021-22 through 2023-24, the Boating Facilities Grant has supplied over 4.9 million dollars of funding towards projects to increase fishing and boating access for Pennsylvanians.*

Pennsylvania manages an extensive network of waterways, including 86,000 miles of rivers and streams; 3,956 lakes, reservoirs, and ponds; and 470,400 acres of Lake Erie. Ensuring public access to these waters is a priority of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), which manages and maintains hundreds of public access points across the commonwealth.

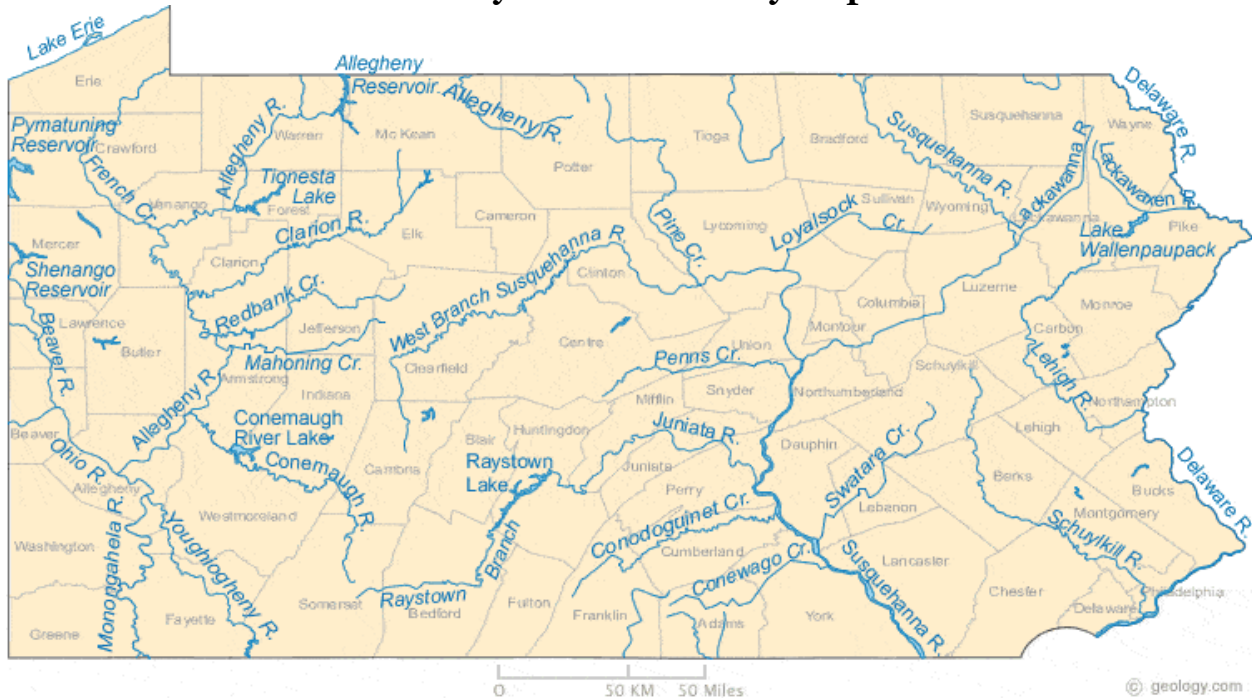
Public access points serve as infrastructure for recreational fishing and boating, offering safe and legal entry points to the state's waters. These sites range from fully developed boat launch facilities with docks and parking to more rustic areas that allow walk-in fishing.

Although PFBC's 2023–2028 strategic plan prioritizes increasing public access to waterways, the agency has not established a numerical target for new access points by 2028. PFBC also works closely with municipalities, land trusts, and other stakeholders to support broader public access to non-PFBC-owned property. Through technical assistance and grant programs such as the Boating Facility Grant Program, PFBC guides the design, improvement, and long-term stewardship of access points, even when it does not directly own the site.

Exhibit 52 illustrates the network of major waterways across the commonwealth, including navigable rivers. These waterways form the foundation of Pennsylvania's aquatic recreation system and play an important role in regional tourism, local economies, and public health and wellness.

Exhibit 52

Pennsylvania Waterway Map



Source: Geology.com, accessed May 1, 2025,

Key Findings

1. We found that a comprehensive assessment of access point compliance criteria was not possible due to the lack of documentation for most of the 248 PFBC-owned access points.
2. For the 48 access points with documentation, the average compliance criteria scores for parking, signage, entrance to property, and ADA compliance were 4.4 or above on a 5-point scale.
3. We found that of the 48 assessed access points, the average compliance criteria scores for access roads and parking areas were 3.9 or lower on a 5-point scale.
4. Thirty-five access points were added during the scope of the audit, three of which are PFBC-owned.

Recommendation: The PFBC should define the number of access points it would like to add to measure its progress in meeting its goal.

Recommendation: The PFBC should record all access point assessments according to its developed criteria and develop a policy to ensure assessments are completed and documented every four years. This would give the agency an overall picture of access point needs and allow for better maintenance planning.

A. Defining Access Points

The PFBC defines access points as:

Points along a waterway that offer walk-in fishing, motorized boating, and/or non-motorized boating with formal public accessibility guaranteed by public ownership or easement. Recreational water access ranges from sites that provide limited or no facilities - often referred to as rustic access - to fully enhanced sites with various amenities.

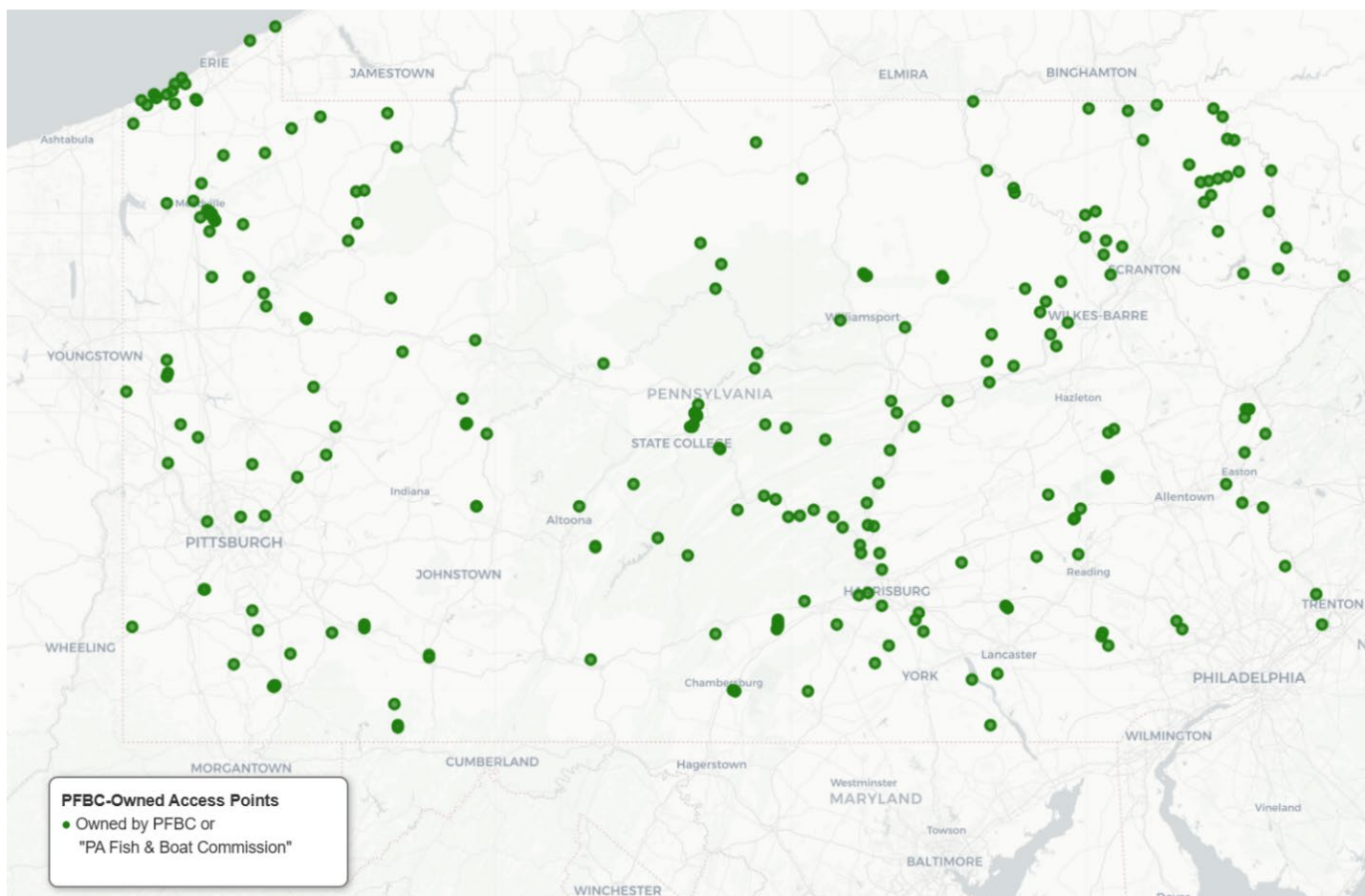
There are 594 active access points, 248 of which are owned by the PFBC. For the remaining 346, the PFBC has some specific right or claim to public access to these points.³⁰ There are many other boating access points within Pennsylvania that PFBC has no association with, such as those administered by DCNR or local governments.

Exhibit 53 maps PFBC-owned access points in Pennsylvania. The PFBC prioritized increasing access points in its 2023-2028 strategic plan; however, it did not delineate a specific number of access points it intended to establish by 2028. In addition to owning many access points, PFBC assists townships, municipalities, and private landowners with management and best practices regarding maintaining access points.

³⁰ PFBC has a claim or right to other access points through easement (right to access water across the land of another owner), agreement (the right to use the property for a defined period of time), or lease (the right to occupy the property for access for a defined period of time).

Exhibit 53

Map of Access Points



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Private landowners own many access points and may allow public access through easements or other agreements. Our findings show that the PFBC has added 35 access points, three of which are PFBC-owned, during the scope of our audit. The number of access points by county varies; for example, Erie has the most, with 79, followed by Crawford County, with 31.

Recommendation: The PFBC should define the number of access points it would like to add to measure its progress in meeting its goal.

Access Point Compliance

The Bureau of Engineering performs access point assessments. Per the PFBC, its expectations and requirements for access points include that:

Access sites are expected to provide parking locations in a capacity consistent with need and to allow passage to the feature provided (launch ramp, dock, fishing area). All access sites are reviewed for ADA-compliant features and whether additional accessibility can be reasonably provided. Local input from Waterways Conservation Officers and the end users is considered, and if projects to expand available facilities are warranted, plans are developed to provide the additional amenities.

It is important that our existing access sites are consistent with the volume of usage and are kept clean and functional. Additional sites are evaluated as they become available, and input from a cross-section of PFBC staff is sought to make sure any acquisitions are a benefit to the end users and consistent with the PFBC mission. Additional sites range from full boat launch facilities to more rustic sites with walk-in fishing easements.

B. Analysis of Access Points

The Bureau of Engineering is to conduct site visits at least every four years to assess compliance. PFBC assists private owners with best practices in managing access points; however, PFBC inspectors only inspect the 250 PFBC-owned access points.

PFBC provided the LBFC with the form it uses to complete access point assessments, which evaluate the following elements of the access point:

- Entrance to Property.
- Access Road and Parking Area (Pavement).
- Access Road and Parking Area (Crushed Stone).
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance.
- Parking.
- Signage.
- Launch Ramp.
- Courtesy Dock.
- Walkway.

Each element was measured on a scale, and some requirements did not apply to all access points. Exhibit 54 details the criteria for assessing PFBC-owned access points.

LBFC asked PFBC for documentation for all access point assessments; however, the agency said that due to “technological challenges in the field,” documentation was only available via reference photographs taken at the time of the assessment for most access points.^{31,32}

PFBC could only provide complete assessments for 48 (19.4 percent) of the 248 PFBC-owned access points, documented on the standard Excel forms used for its assessments.³³ These assessments were completed in 2023 and 2024. Because of the lack of documentation, we could not confirm that all access points have been assessed in the last four years.

Exhibit 54

Accessibility Criteria Matrix

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Criteria measured on a 1-5 Scale					
Signage	Kiosk and regulatory signs are missing.	No regulatory signs missing.	Wooden signs are present, and the signs are in poor condition.	Signs are legible, but minor damage.	All signs are in place and in good condition.
Access Road and Parking Area (Pavement)	Large areas of delamination and large potholes are dangerous to traverse.	Damage (potholes or cracking) to more than 30 percent of the paved area.	Damage (potholes or cracking) to less than 30 percent of the paved area.	Pavement sealing is needed, and lines and pavement marking need to be repainted.	No cracks or potholes.
Criteria measured on a 1-3-5 Scale					
Access Road and Parking Area (Stone)	Large ruts and potholes are dangerous to traverse.		Minor ruts are less than two inches, which can be repaired by grading.		No ruts, potholes, and adequate drainage.
Entrance to Property	Poor sight distance, stop signs, or stop bars are needed.		The entrance needs to be widened or improved, and		Reasonable sight distance and good access.

³¹ PFBC inspectors did not have devices capable of real-time entry of criteria while inspectors were on site.

³² PFBC stated that all access points, except those in Maintenance Area Region Two, have been assessed via photograph. Maintenance Area Region 2 includes Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmorland Counties. PFBC indicated that it has been without a maintenance supervisor in this region for much of this year.

³³ PFBC provided 61 assessments; however, some were eliminated from the analysis due to duplication of documents, or missing values.

		the turning radius needs to be improved.	
ADA Compliance	No ADA measures are in place, and significant improvements are needed (more than \$3,000).	Some ADA measures need minor improvements (less than \$3,000).	ADA compliant.
Parking	Inadequate for the number of vehicles.	No ADA-designated parking areas, or there are not enough ADA-designated parking areas.	Adequately sized and marked/painted.
Launch Ramp	Needs the total replacement of a scour hole ^a at the base of the ramp due to power loading, large spalls ^b , and danger.	Signs of heaving, large cracks or spalls, rebar exposed, inadequate slope, and length.	Ramp is in good condition, with adequate slope and length.
Courtesy Dock	Floats ^c are damaged or inadequate, surface boards are splintered and rotted, and cleats ^d and rub rails ^e are damaged.	The floats are adequate, the wood surfacing is intact but deteriorated, and the rub rails and cleats are present but need replacement.	Floats, rub rails, surfacing, and cleats are all in good condition and functional.
Walkway	The walkway needs total replacement and should be extended to the parking lot; it is not concrete or asphalt.	Signs of heaving or potential trip hazards.	Good condition, minor cracking, and spalling.

^a A scour hole is a depression or erosion formed by removing sediment or material due to the erosive force of flowing water, currents, or waves.

^b In construction, a spall is an area of concrete that has cracked and delaminated from the substrate.

^c Floats are air-tight, hollow structures designed to provide buoyancy.

^d Cleats are metal or plastic fixtures that securely hold lines or ropes in place.

^e Rub rails protect the hull of boats from damage caused by contact with docks, boats, and other objects.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Signage. Signage is measured on a one-to-five scale, with zero making it nonapplicable. This metric applied to all 48 access points. The average score was 4.7, indicating adequate signage for most access points.

Access Road and Parking Area (Pavement and Crushed Stone). Access Road and Parking Area is divided between pavement and stone roads. Each has specific criteria and uses a different scale.

There is a one-to-five scale for paved access roads and parking areas, with zero being nonapplicable. This metric applied to 21 access points. The average score for this metric was 3.4, indicating improvement needed for this criterion.

Crushed stone access roads and parking areas use a 1-3-5 scale, with zero being nonapplicable. This metric applied to 31 access points. The average score for this metric was 3.9, indicating that improvement could be made for this criterion.

Entrance to Property. Entrance to Property is measured on a 1-3-5 scale. This metric applied to all 48 access points examined. The average score for this metric was 4.7, indicating that most access points had entrances that adequately met the criteria.

ADA Compliance. ADA Compliance is measured on a 1-3-5 scale, with zero making it nonapplicable. This metric applied to 43 access points. The average score was 4.4, indicating that most access points followed ADA compliance standards.

Parking. Parking is measured on a 1-3-5 scale, with zero making it not applicable. This metric applied to 47 access points. The average score was 4.7, indicating that most access points had adequate parking.

Launch Ramp. Launch ramps are measured on a 1-3-5 scale, with zero making it not applicable. This metric applied to 30 access points. The average score for this criterion was 4.3, indicating that most launch ramps were adequate or could have slight improvements.

Courtesy Dock. Courtesy docks are measured on a 1-3-5 scale, with zero making it not applicable. This metric applied to seven access points; of those seven, only one received a score of three, the other six received a score of five.

Walkway. Walkways are measured on a 1-3-5 scale, with zero making it not applicable. This metric applied to nine access points; of those, only two received a score of three, indicating a need for improvement of the walkway. The other seven received a score of five.

Exhibit 55 summarizes the scores of the available PFBC access site assessments. Of the nine elements that the PFBC assesses, five had average scores within one-half of a point of the highest score, indicating that these elements are satisfactory and need little improvement. The scores of the other four elements ranged from 3.4 to 4.4, indicating that they may require some adjustments.

Specifically, the average condition criteria scores for signage, entrance to the property, parking, and ADA compliance met or exceeded 4.4 on a 5-point scale. The average condition criteria score for access areas and parking lots was 3.9 or below.

Exhibit 55

Summary of Access Point Assessments

Criteria	Scale	Number of Access Points	Average Score
Pavement Access	1-5	21	3.4
Crushed Stone Access	1,3,5	31	3.9
Signage	1-5	48	4.7
Entrance to Property	1,3,5	48	4.7
ADA	1,3,5	43	4.4
Parking	1,3,5	47	4.7
Launch Ramp	1,3,5	30	4.3
Courtesy Dock	1,3,5	7	4.7
Walkway	1,3,5	9	4.6

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

Due to the unavailability of data for access points, we analyzed the small sample size; however, it is not generalizable to the entirety of PFBC-owned access points. While we recognize that the PFBC has photographs of others, there is no evidence that the PFBC conducted the required analysis.

Recommendation: The PFBC should record all access point assessments according to its developed criteria and develop a policy to ensure assessments are completed and documented every four years. This would give the agency an overall picture of access point needs and allow for better maintenance planning.

The PFBC has been making efforts to improve access point assessment. According to the PFBC, it anticipates outfitting maintenance supervisors

with laptops by the end of the summer of 2025. It will continue inspections in the spring of 2026 to evaluate access points in real time.

Additionally, the PFBC has been conducting a comprehensive statewide evaluation of all properties in its real estate database to identify issues, concerns, and potential future actions. Although the PFBC has evaluated 486 of these properties, this evaluation was incomplete at the time of this study and unable to be analyzed; however, the PFBC informed the LBFC of the following:

“The PFBC maintains a real estate database that contains information on properties it owns, properties for which it has agreements (e.g., leases, easements), and properties awarded grants for improvement. Beginning in the fall of 2023, the PFBC’s Division of Public Access and Property Services produced lists of properties organized by county and PFBC Bureau of Law Enforcement region.

Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) were tasked with visiting each property on their assigned list to verify and collect information, including ownership, latitude/longitude, signage, encroachments, boundary markers, aids to navigation, abandoned vessels, and hazards, as well as to ensure that the site is open to the public, maintained and functional. WCOs compiled notes and photos for all sites visited. The first assessment was conducted in the northwest region in the fall of 2023, and final site assessments finished in April 2025.”

C. Boating Facility Grant

The Boating Facility Grant Program supports developing and enhancing public recreational boating facilities across the commonwealth on property not owned by the PFBC. This initiative ensures that Pennsylvania's recreational boaters can have more options to access high-quality boating facilities.

According to the PFBC, 20 new access points have been created since 2021 due to the boating facilities grant. Exhibit 56 displays the total amount funded by the grant during the scope of our study.

Exhibit 56

Boating Facility Grant Awards
(FY 2021-22 to 2023-24)

Fiscal Year	Number Awarded	Amounts Awarded
2021-22	10	\$1,263,588
2022-23	18	2,013,379
2023-24	13	1,643,600

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the PFBC.

Exhibit 57 shows some examples of projects utilizing the Boating Facility Grant.

Exhibit 57

Boating Facility Grant Projects



The Glen Foerd Conservation Corporation received a planning grant to design a dock directly on the Delaware River. The proposed dock will provide unparalleled free recreational access and will support the applicant's established environmental programs that focus on the watershed. The final dock design will include at least one adaptable ADA kayak launch.

Riverfront North Partnership will redesign and construct the Tacony Boat Launch along the Delaware River. This will include motorized and non-motorized boat ramps, picnic pavilion, a concession and restroom building, improved parking, and a fishing pier. It will improve public safety by demolishing a structurally unsound wharf and installing a living shoreline and overlook pier for anglers.



The Pennsylvania Lake Management Society (PALMS) purchased a mobile boat cleaning station to be used by statewide partners. The statewide locations are frequented by day boaters and they represent the greatest risk of aquatic invasive species (AIS) spread into and out of the waterbodies of the commonwealth.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

A Boating Facility Grant covers up to 50 percent of eligible project costs. These costs include land acquisition, project design, engineering, development, expansion, and public recreational boat access facilities. Eligible activities include the rehabilitation, expansion, or construction of new boat ramps, courtesy floats, access roads, parking areas, restrooms, signage, and localized landscaping. Applicants are required to provide a minimum match of 50 percent of the total project cost. This match may consist of cash, the fair market value of labor or materials, or other grants from federal, state, or local sources.

Public entities such as townships, boroughs, municipal and county governments, and nonprofit groups, including land trusts, conservancies, and watershed associations, are eligible to apply. Private businesses and service clubs do not qualify for grant funding but are encouraged to partner with eligible public entities.

Facilities developed with these grants must remain open and free to the public for at least 25 years. Applicants are also responsible for routine maintenance during this period.

SECTION V PA FISH AND BOAT COMMISSION (PFBC) BACKGROUND



Fast Facts...

- ❖ *The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has been in existence for more than 150 years.*
- ❖ *The Commission is funded through two special funds: the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund.*
- ❖ *The Commission is staffed by over 300 employees who collectively protect, conserve, and enhance the commonwealth's aquatic resources.*

Agency Mandate and Mission

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is an independent administrative agency established in 1866 with authority to administer and enforce the Fish and Boat Code and other commonwealth laws relating to (1) the encouragement, promotion, and development of fishery interests; (2) the protection, propagation, and distribution of fish; (3) the management of boating and the operation of boats; and (4) the promotion, and development of recreational boating.

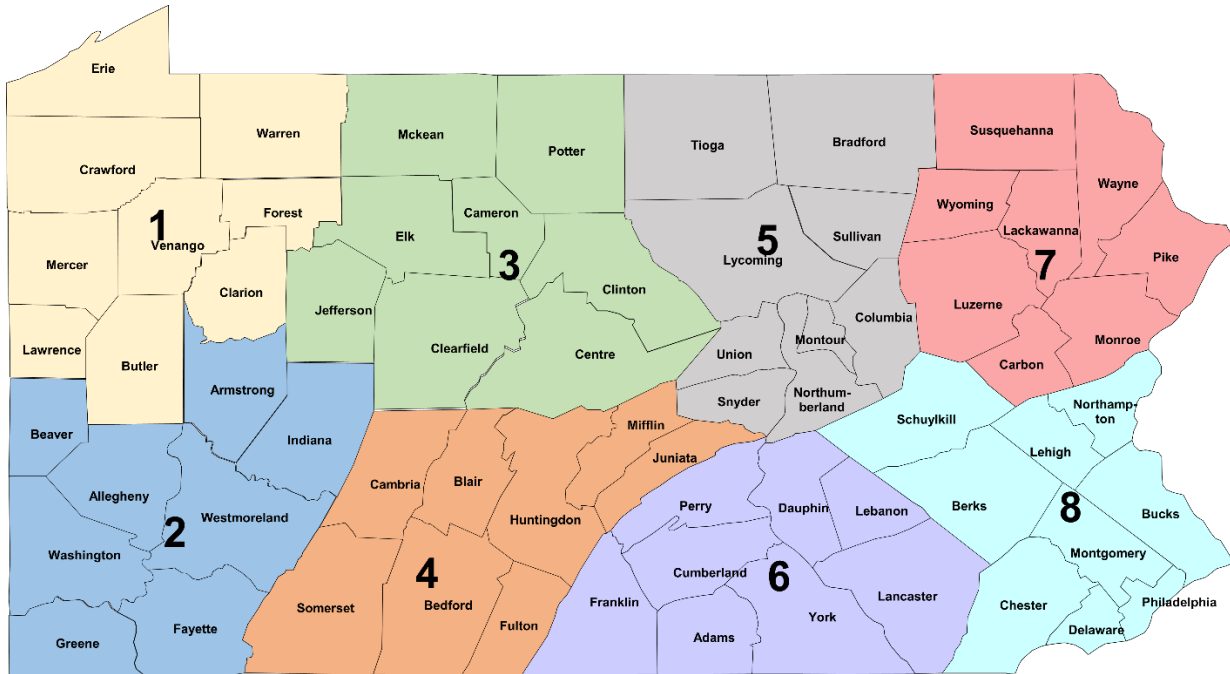
The commission's mission is "to protect, conserve, and enhance the commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities."

The Board of Commissioners

The PFBC's Board of Commissioners is comprised of ten Pennsylvania citizens appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of a majority of the Senate of Pennsylvania. Two PFBC members serve at large and must be experienced in boating and water safety education, and registered boat owners in Pennsylvania. By law, the remaining eight members are required to be residents of a specific geographic district. They must be well-informed on conservation, restoration, fish, fishing, boats, and boating. Exhibit 58 displays these geographic regions.

Exhibit 58

Map of PFBC Districts



Source: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Commission members serve four-year terms and may continue to hold office for up to an additional six months thereafter or until a successor is appointed. Other than reimbursement for travel expenses, members receive no compensation for their service on the commission. The commission must have an office in the Harrisburg area and hold meetings in January, July, and other times and places as the commission may designate. In actual practice, the commission meets quarterly and as needed for committee meetings. At the July meeting each year, the commission elects a president and vice-president from its members. Exhibit 59 specifies the list of incumbent Commission members.

Exhibit 59

PFBC Membership, Districts, and Terms

District	Counties	Incumbent	Term Expiration
One	Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren	Daniel J. Pastore (President)	October 2027
Two	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, and Westmoreland	John E. Mahn, Jr. (Vice President)	December 2025
Three	Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter	William C. Brock	January 2026
Four	Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, and Somerset	Donald K. Anderson	April 2027
Five	Bradford, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union	Eric C. Hussar	October 2027
Six	Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York	Robert (BJ) Small	January 2026
Seven	Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming	William J. Gibney	October 2027
Eight	Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, and Schuylkill	Richard S. Kauffman	October 2027
Boating	At-Large	Charles J. Charlesworth, Sr.	October 2027
Boating	At-Large	Richard Lewis	January 2026

Source: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

A statutorily created eight-member Boating Advisory Board (board) advises the commission on all matters relating to boating. It makes recommendations regarding any proposed rules or regulations affecting the equipment or operation of boats. The board consists of three ex-officio members, including the Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the PFBC Executive Director, and the Assistant Executive Director in charge of watercraft safety, and five volunteer members who are required to be experienced boaters and members of boating volunteer organizations. The governor appoints members for five-year terms.

Fish Fund and Boat Fund

The PFBC administers two funds, the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund. All fees, royalties, fines, penalties, and other monies paid, received, recovered, and collected under the Fish and Boat Code are to be deposited into these funds. Further, the Boat Fund receives some funds from the Liquid Fuels Tax.³⁴ As stated in the Fish and Boat Code (30 Pa.C.S. §521 and §531), monies in both funds may be used for the following purposes relating to fish, fishing, boats, and boating from each fund, respectively:

- The payment of expenses incurred in processing, issuing, or supervising the issuance of fishing licenses, boat registrations, special licenses, and permits.
- Salaries, wages, and travel expenses of the executive director and other employees.
- Travel expenses of commission members, officers, and employees.
- Purchase of furniture, supplies, materials, equipment, fuel, motor vehicles, boats, and insurance.
- Postage and telephone expenses.
- Rentals for any offices outside of the Capitol buildings or any other grounds, buildings, or quarters necessary for the commission's work.
- Purchase of lands and waters and impounding waters in Pennsylvania for fishing, boating, and other recreational purposes.³⁵
- The refund of fees, royalties, fines, or other monies erroneously or unjustly paid into the Fish Fund or the Boat Fund.
- The lease of land, interests in land, or licenses for the commission's use.
- The purchase of such furniture, furnishings, stationery, supplies, materials, equipment, fuel, motor vehicles, boats, and printing and binding as may be necessary to the conduct of the work of the commission, and the payment of premiums on surety bonds for such officers or employees of the commission as may be required to obtain policies of workmen's compensation insurance and policies of liability insurance covering the motor vehicles and persons operating them.

Additionally, monies in the **Fish Fund** can be used specifically for fish and fishing-related purposes:

- Propagation, protection, management, and distribution of fish and fish stocking.

³⁴ Act 89 of 2013 directs that oil company franchise taxes imposed on fuel used for the operation of motorboats or watercraft in Pennsylvania waterways must be refunded to the Boat Fund.

³⁵ Impounding refers to a process of collecting and storing water.

- Necessary repairs and improvements to fish cultural stations and other buildings, offices, or quarters used by the commission.
- Direct purchase of fish and fish food.
- Purchase and acquisition of additional land and waters for fish cultural stations; the purchase and construction of buildings, ponds, and other extensions incidental to fish cultural stations; the propagation and protection of fish cultural stations; and the distribution and stocking of fish from fish cultural stations.
- Other contingent, incidental, and other expenses reasonably necessary in carrying on the commission's work, including the costs of activities to promote public interest in recreational fishing in Pennsylvania.

Monies in the **Boat Fund** can be used specifically for boats and boating-related purposes:

- Maintenance and operation of commission boats.
- The payment of the travel and other expenses of the Boating Advisory Board, officers, employees, and other persons as may be required for the work of the commission.
- Necessary repairs and improvements to boating access areas, buildings, offices, or quarters used in the commission's work.
- Maintenance and operation of boats as required for the commission's business.
- Purchase of lands and waters and impounding waters to make them available for Pennsylvania citizens for boating and other recreational purposes.
- The development and implementation of a boating safety education program.
- Any contingent, incidental, or other expenses of any kind or description reasonably necessary in carrying on the commission's work relating to boats and boating, including the costs of activities for promoting recreational boating.

The Fish and Boat Code also authorizes the commission to enter into cooperative agreements with Pennsylvania, federal, and other state and local government agencies and interstate compact agencies to impound, manage, use, maintain, and operate waters for public fishing and boating.³⁶ Both Fish Fund and Boat Fund monies may be expended for agreed-upon pro rata shares of the costs associated with the acquisition, construction, operation, and maintenance of these projects. In addition, the commission may enter into agreements and expend funds from the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund for private or commercial interests for fishing and boating purposes.

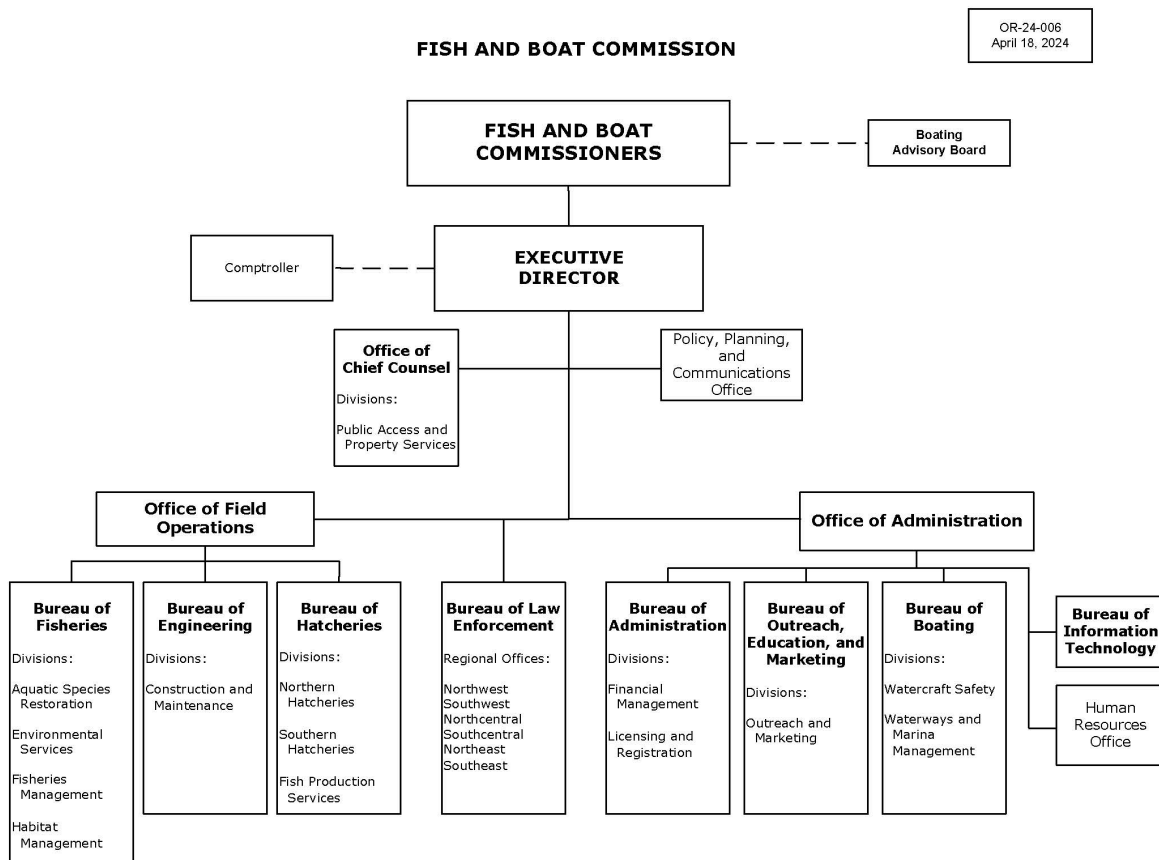
³⁶ See 30 Pa.C.S. §521(b).

Agency Organization

As shown in Exhibit 60, the PFBC has undergone an agency restructuring since the LBFC's 2022 audit. Notably, there is now a Division of Public Access and Property Services under the Office of Chief Counsel and the Division of Aquatic Species Restoration under the Bureau of Fisheries.

Exhibit 60

PFBC Organization Chart



Source: PFBC.

A brief description of PFBC organizational units and their responsibilities follows:

Boating Advisory Board: Advises PFBC on all matters relating to boating and makes recommendations regarding any proposed rules or regulations affecting the equipment or operation of boats.

Executive Director: Performs the duties and responsibilities required by Section 302 of Title 30 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes;³⁷ administers the operations and activities of the commission; serves as the Chief Waterways Conservation Officer; and serves as an ex-officio member on several boards and other entities.³⁸

- Office of Chief Counsel: Furnishes legal advice to the PFBC; represents the commission in all state courts in civil matters and in all state and federal administrative proceedings; coordinates with the Office of Attorney General, other state and district offices, and private counsels on legal matters related to the PFBC; drafts proposed legislation, regulations, contracts, memoranda of understanding, and other legal documents; reviews and approves legality and form of proposed rules, regulations, and other legal documents (e.g. deeds, contracts) required for the PFBC's operations; reviews and approves certificates of title or title insurance binders for real estate; coordinates legal aspects of land acquisition and disposition; conducts legal research; administers the Right-to-Know Law; coordinates with other state entities on a wide variety of matters (e.g., copyrights, fiscal matters); reviews requests for supplemental employment and provides counsel regarding ethical questions and disciplinary matters; coordinates the PFBC's actions where an employee or officer is sued or charged with a crime; apprises the PFBC of legal developments; conducts training of agency law enforcement personnel; support the PFBC's hearing officers during administrative hearings; and attends the PFBC's and Boating Advisory Board's meetings and other proceedings relating to the PFBC's operations. This Office includes the Division of Public Access and Property Services.
- Policy, Planning, and Communications Office: Plans, directs, and coordinates advanced policies, legislative efforts, strategic planning, and program analysis and development related to fishing, boating, and aquatic resources projects; conducts research, gathers data, and identifies trends for policy recommendations that are consistent with the PFBC's goals and the needs of the fishing and boating public; ensures that various PFBC initiatives are consistent with broader

³⁷ By the Act of October 16, 1980 (P.L.996, No.175), § 1 known as the Fish and Boat Code; 30 Pa.C.S. § 302.

³⁸ For example, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Environmental Quality Board, the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, and the Boating Advisory Board.

policy objectives and strategic plans, coordinates, develops, and tracks short-range goals and objectives and long-range plans consistent with the executive director's priorities; leads the development and updates of the PFBC's Strategic Plan and ensures its alignment with budgets, expenditures, and planning work; manages the development and implementation of the PFBC's legislative agenda; serves as liaison between the PFBC and the General Assembly; analyzes legislation affecting the PFBC and its work; and represents the PFBC in discussions with local, state, and federal officials and other external partners; prepares responses and position statements for the PFBC.

Manages the PFBC's public relations initiatives; responds to inquiries relating to the PFBC; prepares and distributes news releases, public reports, newsletters, and other written materials; and participates in and coordinates news conferences and media appearances by the PFBC staff and executive director.

Office of Field Operations: Manages, develops, and coordinates the PFBC's Engineering, Fisheries, and Hatcheries programs.

- **Bureau of Fisheries:** Directs the research, management, conservation, and protection of fish, fisheries, reptiles, amphibians, and other aquatic organisms, including threatened and endangered species; serves as a proxy for the executive director on both the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission; and represents the PFBC on various agencies, organizations, and committees.³⁹ The bureau includes the Division of Environmental Services, Division of Fisheries Management, Division of Habitat Management, and Division of Aquatic Species Restoration.
- **Bureau of Hatcheries:** Directs the production and stocking of fish in Pennsylvania waters; manages hatchery effluents within the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit limits; oversees the infrastructure and renovations to state fish hatcheries; manages all interstate exchanges or trades of fish and eggs; and represents the agency on various interstate and intrastate aquaculture related committees and organizations. The bureau includes the Division of Northern Hatcheries, the Division of Southern Hatcheries, and the Division of Fish Production Services.⁴⁰

³⁹ This includes the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Council of Great Lakes Fisheries Agencies, Mississippi Cooperative Interstate Cooperative Resource Association, Northeast Association of Fisheries Agency Administrators, various committees within the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and other organizations and interagency committees as necessary.

⁴⁰ The Division of Northern Hatcheries cover the following areas: Corry, Union City, Fairview, Linesville, Oswayo, Pleasant Mount, and Tionesta. The Division of Southern Hatcheries cover the following areas: Bellefonte, Benner Spring, Huntsdale, Pleasant Gap, Tylersville, and Reynoldsdale.

- Bureau of Engineering: Oversees the planning, engineering, design, construction, and maintenance of fishing and boating facilities, hatcheries, and other PFBC property. This Bureau includes the Division of Construction and Maintenance.

Bureau of Law Enforcement: Directs the enforcement of fish and boating laws; assists other agencies as requested and deemed appropriate; effectuates the execution of the PFBC's programs, Fish and Boat Code investigations, and services initiated by other bureaus and divisions on behalf of the PFBC (e.g., site permit reviews, conservation education programs, boating education, and fish stocking); assists in the development or modification of Fish and Boat Code regulations or laws; interprets laws, regulations, and procedures for the public, regional headquarters, staff, and field quarters; administers the volunteer deputy program; develops and implements standard operating procedures and policies for the law enforcement bureau; and seeks and applies for alternative funding for law enforcement equipment.⁴¹

Office of Administration: Manages the PFBC's administrative, boating, public affairs, human resources, and information technology programs.

- Bureau of Administration: Provides administrative support services for all PFBC operations and programs; monitors maintenance, operating expenses and repairs; disposes of vehicles and other rolling stock; manages the surplus property program; oversees the maintenance and operation of the PFBC's headquarters building; administers records management programs; oversees and coordinates all federal funds and grants; serves as the liaison for federal projects between the PFBC, other state agencies, and the federal government; and provides mail, messenger, and related services. The bureau includes the Division of Financial Management and the Division of Licensing and Registration.
- Bureau of Outreach, Education, and Marketing: Serves as the PFBC's marketing liaison to state travel and tourism departments, conservation agencies, advertising agencies, and commercial promoters; acts as the PFBC's liaison with the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation; and administers statewide education and recreational programs, materials, and services aimed at increasing participation in fishing, safe boating, and conservation. The bureau includes the Division of Outreach and Marketing.
- Bureau of Boating: Serves as an ex-officio member and secretary to the Boating Advisory Board and as the commonwealth's Boating Law Administrator; is the liaison with the United States Coast Guard, PA

⁴¹ The Bureau has six (Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Southeast, North Central, and South Central) regional offices.

Department of Transportation, other state boating law officials, and the PFBC's Bureau of Administration on boat registration and titling matters; directs the development of comprehensive boating laws and regulations; serves as a liaison with various agencies and Boating-at-Large Commissioners to further the PFBC's mission and programs; serves as the Board of Commissioners' Boating Committee contact; and oversees the PFBC's Use (Launch) Permit Program. This Bureau includes the Division of Waterways and Marina Management and the Division of Watercraft Safety.

- Bureau of Information Technology: Provides leadership, governance, and information systems and technologies that are aligned with the strategic direction of the PFBC; provides support for all components of PFBC's information technology network and data store; provides overall direction, support and management of the PFBC's information technology infrastructure; provides technology solutions; operates and maintains all distributed computing platforms and systems; coordinates customer service activities related to information technology; and ensures compliance with the commonwealth's policies and standards.
- Human Resources Office: Classifies and recommends pay scale groups for PFBC positions; advises the PFBC staff about human resource policy and procedures; administers PFBC's training programs; directs the PFBC's labor relations program and assists the PFBC in resolving labor relations issues; assists recruitment and employee placement efforts; maintains Official Personnel Files of employees and the personnel directories; and directs the time and attendance, financial disclosure, workers compensation, performance management, and unemployment compensation programs.

Agency Complement

As of March 26, 2025, the PFBC's staff complement totaled 421 salaried positions, an increase of 11 since our last report in 2022. As shown in Exhibit 61, 371 of the salaried positions were filled, and 50 were vacant. The two largest bureaus are the Bureau of Hatcheries (105 positions) and the Bureau of Law Enforcement (108 positions).

Exhibit 61

PFBC Salaried Staff Complement, by Organizational Unit (As of March 26, 2025)

Organizational Unit	Filled	Vacant	Total
Executive Office	2	0	2
<i>Office of Chief Counsel</i>	7	0	7
<i>Policy, Planning, and Communications Office</i>	4	1	5
Office of Field Operations	2	0	2
<i>Bureau of Fisheries</i>	58	8	66
<i>Bureau of Engineering</i>	46	5	51
<i>Bureau of Hatcheries</i>	102	3	105
Bureau of Law Enforcement	84	24	108
Office of Administration	1	1	2
<i>Bureau of Administration</i>	29	3	32
<i>Bureau of Outreach, Education, and Marketing</i>	13	2	15
<i>Bureau of Boating</i>	7	0	7
<i>Bureau of Information Technology</i>	12	1	13
<i>Human Resources Office</i>	4	2	6
Total	371	50	421

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PFBC.

This page was intentionally left blank.

APPENDICES



Appendix A – Status of Prior Recommendations from 2022

Recommendation #1

The General Assembly should direct the LBFC to further study the feasibility of merging the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund into one special fund. As part of this analysis, the LBFC should factor all relevant cost savings, not just to the PFBC, but to other state governmental agencies, e.g., the Department of Revenue and the State Treasury. Additionally, opinions of such a consolidation should be obtained from relevant boating and angling stakeholders.

PFBC Comment:

The PFBC would welcome the review and any associated recommendations to aid in efficiently merging and managing a combined fund to ensure robust accounting capability to meet reporting requirements for fishing and boating-related expenditures separately.

Recommendation #2

The results of the above analysis should be reported to the House and Senate Game and Fisheries Committees for its collective consideration and possible action.

PFBC Comment:

Agree, should a study be initiated by the LBFC.

Recommendation #3

To ensure that the PFBC's hatcheries continue to support the agency's mission, we recommend the General Assembly consider passing the proposed projects listed for the PFBC within the capital budget act for FY 2021-22.

PFBC Comment:

Complete (Act 27 of 2022). The PFBC continues to work with the General Assembly, DGS, and Governor's Budget Office on additional authorizations for future capital infrastructure improvement projects to address long overdue hatchery infrastructure needs, prioritize biosecurity, enhance operations, and provide staff and public safety.

Recommendation #4

The Governor's Office and the Department of General Services should expedite the completion of the projects for the hatcheries, as well as other projects related to dams, lakes, and other access points.

PFBC Comment:

Agree. DGS holds a monthly and annual meeting with PFBC regarding the status of current projects and upcoming projects.

Recommendation #5

The PFBC should complete a full audit of the verification leave incentive to ensure all employees complied with the Office of Administration's requirements for obtaining verification leave.

PFBC Comment:

This recommendation is no longer relevant; the availability of verification leave incentive has ended.

Recommendation #6

The PFBC commissioners should consider whether to proceed with any further incentives from the Office of Administration that will involve unexpected costs to the Fish Fund and Boat Fund.

PFBC Comment:

The PFBC Board of Commissioners' central role is to govern and formulate policies to fulfill its role and has delegated its authority related to staff through the PFBC's Executive Director. Therefore, all authority and accountability of staff are delegated to the Executive Director and all delegated actions must be consistent with the Board's Human Resources Policy and section 304 of the Fish and Boat Code.

Board policy limits Board involvement in personnel-related matters to the transfer of functions to and/or from other commonwealth agencies, furloughs, establishments, or closures of field offices, and any organizational change at the bureau level or higher. Section 304 of the Fish and Boat Code (30 Pa.C.S. § 304) requires the PFBC to act in accordance with the classification and compensation plans of the Governor's Executive Board for the appointment and compensation of employees.

In addition, the PFBC has historically relied on the Governor's Office of Administration for its policies, management and accounting systems, and internal control processes for administering employee pay and benefits. Given the need to adhere to Board policy and the Fish and Boat Code and to collaboratively work with the Governor's Office of Administration on employee pay and benefits, the PFBC Commissioners have limited ability to implement this recommendation.

Appendix B – License and Permit Sales – Three-Year Trend

Fishing and License Permit Category	UNITS SOLD		
	2022	2023	2024
1-Day Resident	3,317	3,921	4,157
1-Day Tourist	5,153	5,225	4,941
10-Year Non-Resident	24	17	16
10-Year Resident	830	870	685
3-Day Tourist	23,920	23,643	23,043
3-Year Non-Resident	585	547	565
3-Year Resident	14,247	13,143	13,683
3-Year Senior Resident	869	1,592	1,686
5-Year Non-Resident	77	106	98
5-Year Resident	3,767	4,625	3,393
5-Year Senior Resident	150	290	227
7-Day Tourist	7,306	7,880	8,229
PA Resident National Guard/Reserve	87	122	77
Senior Lifetime	21,416	16,029	14,284
Non-Resident	51,847	52,468	49,524
Non-Resident PA Student	976	1,223	1,128
POW Resident Annual	0	0	0
POW Resident Lifetime	0	0	0
Reduced Disabled Veteran	542	594	882
Resident	622,387	619,235	599,607
Senior Resident	26,669	30,208	32,424
Voluntary Youth	9,494	8,368	8,430
3-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Permit	2,411	2,254	2,288
3-Year Lake Erie Permit	207	232	263
3-Year Trout Permit	13,480	12,596	11,723
5-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Permit	752	964	722
5-Year Lake Erie Permit	58	63	54
5-Year Trout Permit	4,680	5,035	3,915
10-Year Combination Lake Erie and Trout Permit	216	233	170
10-Year Lake Erie Permit	11	13	9
10-Year Trout Permit	1,279	1,191	880
Combination Lake Erie and Trout Permit	78,055	74,771	71,460
Lake Erie Permit	22,327	23,003	23,383
Trout Permit	452,395	446,291	419,054
Total Licenses and Permits	1,369,534	1,356,752	1,301,000

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

This page was intentionally left blank.

Appendix C – Boat Registration/Title/Permits – Three-Year Trend

Category	FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24
Total Boat Registrations ^{a/}	141,667	152,903	159,599
Total Boat Titles ^{b/}	27,621	30,556	37,583
Total Boat Launch Permits ^{c/}	144,043	153,761	147,169

^{a/} All registration transactions are for a two-year period. Registrations include new registrations, renewals, and transfers. Registration and titling sales start December 1 of the prior year and run through November 30.

^{b/} Titles include new titles, corrected titles, and lien titles.

^{c/} Launch permits include one-year and two-year permits and follow a calendar year basis.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from PFBC.

This page was intentionally left blank.

Appendix D – Agency Response



June 17, 2025

Christopher R. Latta, Executive Director
Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
400A Finance Building
613 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Mr. Latta:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee's (LBFC) latest triennial audit of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC). The PFBC is a relatively small state agency, yet our work and impact extend to all corners of the Commonwealth. Please accept our compliments on the professionalism shown by Anne Witkonis, James Wynne, Josh Ballard, and Anthony Choi. Anne and team graciously worked with numerous PFBC staff members to learn about, examine, and report on the PFBC programs under review and the general financial condition of the agency. Their efforts resulted in several recommendations, which we were asked to comment on as part of the audit report finalization process. Our nearly 420 full-time and approximately 200 seasonal staff statewide deliver incredible results on behalf of the Commonwealth's 824,000 anglers, one-million boaters (over 280,000 registered boats and 300,000 unpowered launch permits), and aquatic resources. For your convenience, those recommendations are provided below, followed by our comments in italicized text.

HUNTFISHPA

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, specifically during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the Session Response Time metric in HuntFishPA to incentivize desired system performance.

Response: *The PFBC recognizes the importance of maintaining optimal system performance, particularly during peak periods. Negotiating higher financial penalties during peak months could serve as a strong incentive for improved system performance by our vendor; however, it is essential to ensure that such adjustments align with overall business objectives, contractual fairness, and operational feasibility. We must also evaluate the potential impact on the vendor relationship, cost structures, and service reliability.*

A 99.9% session response within five seconds Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a strong performance metric and competitive with industry standards for other E-commerce and online services, with leading platforms targeting 99% or higher within a few seconds to ensure smooth user experiences.

Tyler Technologies has been actively enhancing the microservices architecture of HuntFishPA to optimize system performance. Their improvements have focused on identifying and addressing performance bottlenecks while ensuring greater flexibility and scalability, particularly during peak usage periods. Tyler Technologies is committed to continuing to refine microservices within HuntFishPA to enhance responsiveness and improve overall system efficiency. During March and April 2025, the microservices updates implemented in HuntFishPA show improved performance during the peak fishing sales period, bringing the system closer to meeting the SLA metrics. In March, the SLA metric reached 99.8%, while in April, it achieved 99.6%, both peak sales months.

Recommendation: The PFBC should negotiate higher financial penalties, particularly during peak-demand months for fishing and boating products, within its Service Level Agreement for the First Contact HuntFishPA metric to incentivize desired system performance.

Response: *Incorporating higher financial penalties during peak months in the SLA for the First Contact HuntFishPA metric is one approach to encourage stronger system performance and greater reliability when service levels are most critical.*

The PFBC recognizes the importance of timely support, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency through this SLA metric. We also recognize the challenges faced with two agencies sharing the same licensing system, especially during separate or overlapping peak periods, where competition for resources can strain performance.

A 90% first-contact SLA, ensuring calls in the queue are answered within two minutes, serves as a strong benchmark for call center support. While industry standards vary, this metric remains competitive, particularly for call centers like HuntFishPA, where calls often require more in-depth assistance. Ensuring fairness and feasibility in assessing penalties is essential to driving meaningful improvements and establishing appropriate structures. To aid this effort, Tyler Technologies has been actively reviewing past support performance, seasonal trends, and operational constraints to pinpoint areas for enhancement.

REGISTRATION AND TITLING SYSTEM (RATS)

Recommendation: The PFBC should investigate how to improve its boat registration processing time to reduce backlogs.

Response: *Since FY 2021-22, the PFBC has taken several steps to evaluate the boat registration processing program and identify improvements that would increase processing efficiencies and improve customer service. Multiple ongoing process improvements have been implemented which have resulted in faster processing times and the elimination of the boat registration application backlog, as of November 2024.*

Recommendation: The PFBC should develop specific and measurable benchmarks for boat registration application processing and customer support metrics to better track and improve the DLAR's boat registration processing and customer support functions.

Response: *The PFBC has established performance measures for Division of Licensing and Registration (DLAR) staff that are used to track boat registration application processing, customer support effectiveness and efficiency. Additionally, as part of the ongoing process improvements being implemented in DLAR which have resulted in faster processing times and the elimination of the boat registration application backlog, there have been measurable improvements to our customer support metrics.*

In 2024, from 03/01/2024 to 05/31/2024, the call center handled 8,578 calls.

- The average hold time for a customer was 32:50; and*
- The average talk time was 6:28.*

In 2025, from 03/01/2025 to 05/31/2025, the call center handled 9,428 calls, which is an increase of 10% in volume from 2024.

- The average hold time for a customer was 7:53, which is a decrease of 76% from 2024; and*
- The average talk time was 4:44, which is a decrease of 27% from 2024.*

In May 2025, DLAR staff were notified of their selection as finalists for the 2024 Governor's Award of Excellence for their accomplishments which include:

- Faster processing times for boat registration applications (from 60 days to a 5-day average turnaround during non-peak season)*
- Increased daily processing ability*
- 15% decrease in incoming calls to DLAR call center*
- 18% decrease in average call duration*
- 14% decrease in average call center wait time*
- Elimination of application backlog for the first time in agency history (For historical context, the average lowest point of the backlog was previously around 300-350 applications.)*

The DLAR team continues to strive to reduce the average application processing time, improve the customer call-center experience, and implement additional internal controls to improve problem solving for more consistent guidance in and proper resolution of issues.

FISHING AND BOATING ACCESS POINTS

Recommendation: The PFBC should record all access point assessments according to its developed criteria and develop a policy to ensure assessments are completed and documented every four years. This would give the agency an overall picture of access point needs and allow for better maintenance planning.

Response: *The PFBC appreciates the recognition of the value of long-term planning and consistent documentation. The recommendation will be taken into consideration as we continue to evaluate and refine our approach to access area management and planning.*

Please note the following additional information regarding the PFBC's Access Inspection Program:

- *PFBC access areas are visually inspected and monitored on a monthly basis by maintenance staff across the Commonwealth. Six maintenance regions, supported by 17 full-time staff and 10 seasonal staff, are responsible for routine upkeep and addressing site-level needs such as grass cutting, debris removal, tree clearing, sign maintenance, and culvert cleaning. These tasks are prioritized and addressed locally as needed.*
- *The Access Inspection Program referenced in the report is administered separately by PFBC Bureau of Engineering staff. This program utilizes a condition scoring matrix to support capital planning and workload prioritization for infrastructure improvements. It is not intended to guide day-to-day or routine maintenance needs, which are handled through the regional maintenance structure described above.*

Recommendation: The PFBC should define the number of access points it would like to add to measure its progress in meeting its goals.

Response: *Although the PFBC has a specific connection, right, or claim to 594 access points in Pennsylvania, most of Pennsylvania's more than 1,000 public fishing and boating access points are owned, managed, and maintained by organizations other than the PFBC such as townships, boroughs, counties, municipal authorities, and other state and federal agencies. While the PFBC has limited properties on which to add sites, countless opportunities exist for partners to develop, rehabilitate, or enhance access points ranging from fully developed sites to casual walk-in locations. The PFBC provides technical assistance, including the newly revised Pennsylvania Fishing and Boating Access Strategy developed in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, to assist partners with identifying needs and priorities, pursuing funding opportunities, implementing projects, and operating and maintaining sites. The PFBC annually provides up to \$2.5 million in financial support to eligible entities through its Statewide Public Access Grant Program. Grant awards require at least 50 percent match which leverages and extends the impact of Commission funds. Local development of access sites builds community, impacts local economies, and ensures successful operation and management of these sites. With the variability of factors that influence access site development, partner needs and priorities, and availability of external funding (including federal funding), it would be challenging for the PFBC to identify a specific number of sites to be added.*

Thank you again for the chance to review and comment on the report. We look forward to appearing before the LBFC to answer any questions and discuss our agency's perspective in-person.

Sincerely,



Timothy D. Schaeffer
Executive Director