



Comments on House Bill 1157: Consultation with federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth; permits and reviews with potential impacts on environmental, cultural, and historic resources.

Michaela Pavlat, National Parks Conservation Association

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the time and opportunity to comment on House Bill 1157 for agencies to consult on permits and reviews with Federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth. My name is Michaela Pavlat, I am an Indigenous Partnerships Field Representative in the Mid-Atlantic region at the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), which is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit organization with 1.6 million members and supporters across the country, including over 61,000 here in Pennsylvania. I am Anishinnabe, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Michigan. On behalf of NPCA, I am speaking in support of this bill enforcing tribal sovereignty.

The tribes in the state of Virginia have had sovereign rights since time immemorial and Virginia formally acknowledged such status in the 1677 Treaty of Middle Planation. The treaty upholds tribal rights to land, water and government-to-government relationships. This bill enforces the treaty obligations and the Executive Order 82, supporting consultation between state agencies and federally recognized tribes. This bill ensures early consultation with tribes which is crucial in successful consultation and collaboration with tribal nations.

The National Parks Conservation Association recognizes the inherent sovereignty of Tribal Nations and supports tribes' assertion of sovereignty through government-to-government consultation and management of lands. Our National Parks are on Native land and native people should have a voice in decisions impacting our lands and water. This bill enforces the value of tribal perspective and consent on environmental, cultural and historic resources projects and issues. NPCA supports this bill's goal to strengthen relationships with tribes and government agencies.

Thank you for your time.

Michaela Pavlat
Indigenous Partnerships Field Representative
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