

# **Pennsylvania Game Commission**

## **Board of Commissioners**

### **Policy Manual**



Prepared and Approved by:  
The Board of Commissioners

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# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Game Commission

### Policy Statement

### Board Accountability

The PGC's mission is to manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations.

These policies will be directed toward maintaining a balance between the critical factors that influence the health and natural function of the Commonwealth's various wildlife habitats and hunting and wildlife related outdoor opportunities. Those factors include the species we are charged with protecting, the habitat that supports those species, the people who enjoy and utilize the resources, and the long-term viability of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC).

The Board will also ensure that the Commission has a current strategic plan that is consistent with and furthers the implementation of the mission. The strategic plan will guide the actions and decisions of the Board, the Executive Director, and all staff. The Board will hold both staff and itself accountable for implementing those priorities outlined in the strategic plan.

In addition, the Board will develop and promulgate regulations that are consistent with supporting this mission and the statutory requirements mandated by law.

1. The Board represents and owns this mission. It recognizes that its legal responsibility begins and ends with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the resources that are essential to fulfilling this mission. It also acknowledges that accomplishing this mission requires a critical analysis of the intersection that occurs between the resource, the people, and the natural habitats that support the mission.
2. The Board will educate itself regarding the resource and the people it represents. The Board's education will be facilitated by:
  - A. Reviewing reports, presentations, and other materials prepared by PGC staff and any external sources it deems appropriate.
  - B. Studying issues and concerns of resource users and key experts.
  - C. Discussions with elected officials, stakeholders, and service providers.
  - D. Monitoring the demand and utilization of services and programs.
3. The Board will maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct.
  - A. No Board member will personally benefit from or make use of any resources of the Commission.
  - B. Board members will recuse themselves from voting or deliberating on issues in which they may have a financial interest.
  - C. Board Members may consult directly with staff for the purpose of asking questions and gaining information. However, Board members will not place

demands upon the staff that involve inordinate time commitments, expenses, or diversions from previously defined policy directions. The Executive Director and Regional or Bureau Directors should normally receive a courtesy copy of requests for information.

- D. Board members will not provide direction or instruction to the staff.
  - E. Board members are reminded that they represent and work on behalf of the wildlife resources and citizens of the Commonwealth and do not represent any constituency.
4. The Board as a whole is responsible for implementing these policies and holding each Board member accountable for adhering to these policies.
- A. Serious breaches of policy can be brought before the Board.

Commissioners are subject to state statutes, regulations, and policies with regard to many actions. These include the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, the Governor's Code of Conduct, and others. These set a legal standard within which we all must operate. However, in order to further ensure that the Commissioners and staff work effectively and appropriately, the Board of Commissioners has established the following guidelines. These guidelines will need revision from time to time and can be amended or revised by the Board of Commissioners at any time.

# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

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### Governing Style

The Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Game Commission have the role of formulating policies to guide the Agency and promulgating rules for hunting, wildlife management, and related activities. It will do so by focusing on strategic leadership rather than administrative detail.

Therefore, its role will be:

1. Proactive rather than reactive.
2. Strategic rather than administrative.
3. Distinct from that of the Executive Director and the staff. The Board, and only the Board, will establish the broad policies that provide direction to the Agency. While the Executive Director is encouraged to express his thoughts relative to those policies, he is expected to execute them and will be evaluated relative to the quality and timeliness of that execution. The Executive Director will further establish policies to step down the Board's policies as necessary

To that end, the Board will:

1. Deliberate in many voices but govern in one.
2. Be responsible for excellence in governing. It will initiate policy and resist efforts on the part of others to impose policy directives without formal consideration and adoption by the Board.
3. Direct, control, and lead the organization through the careful establishment of written Board policies that reflect the Board's values and perspectives. Such policies will:
  - focus on short-term consequences and long-term impacts.
  - reflect a firm commitment to managing and understanding the needs of the Commonwealth's wildlife and its people.
  - will seek to avoid operating, administrative, and programmatic means of achieving those ends unless the Commissioners believe such action is necessary to the accomplishment of its policies.
4. Recognize that its first priority is the wildlife resources of the Commonwealth as a whole.

5. Use individual areas of expertise to enhance its ability as a governing body to fulfill its mission rather than substituting individual judgments for Board values and policies.
6. Solicit information from whatever sources it deems appropriate.
7. Be prepared for meetings.
8. Ensure the orientation of new members in its governance process to maintain continuity of governance capabilities.
9. Be self-monitoring. It will review its processes and performance regularly to assure that its activities and disciplines are consistent with its governing role.
10. Develop its agenda in consultation with, but not under the exclusive direction of, the Executive Director. Board members are encouraged to provide timely input into the development of the agenda. The President and Executive Director are expected to work collaboratively toward the development of a final agenda for Board meetings.
11. Promulgate regulations in an open and deliberate manner that incorporates such input as the Board deems appropriate and is required by law. Input should represent the most current research and information available. Recognizing the importance of maintaining suitable regulations and the potential for unproductive complexity and unintended consequences, the Board should assure that ample time for its considered debate and evaluation is allowed. The Board must assure that regulations are precise, understandable to the public, and consistent with its policies. In addition, the Board will, at all times, seek to simplify regulations.
12. Constantly strive to improve upon its ability to envision and articulate the future and its relationship to its mission.
13. Insist that all of its activities and those of its Executive Director be prudent, ethical, and legal.
14. Elect its officers annually at its regularly scheduled January meeting as provided for in statute.
15. Encourage and support the Executive Director in efforts to ensure that the agency possesses and develops the necessary core competencies, skills, talents, and managerial capabilities to fulfill its mission and sustain its long-term viability.
16. The operation of the Board of Commissioners public meetings shall conform to the most current version of Roberts Rules of Order

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**Working Group Policy**

The Board may, from time to time, establish Working Groups and committees to assist it in fulfilling its responsibilities. Working Groups and Committees will be used sparingly so as to avoid interference with the wholeness of the Board's job.

Working Groups should have a well-developed, written charge that defines their respective roles, their membership, suggested staff contacts, specific objectives, and targeted accomplishments.

Working Group assignments and Working Group chairs should be announced by the President prior to the spring meeting each year. Working Groups are primarily established to facilitate the exchange of information between the staff and the Board. Working Groups cannot deliberate or decide on any matters that will come before the Board.

1. Standing Working Groups can be established by the Board for specific purposes.
  - A. Working Groups may be comprised of Board members only. However, Working Groups may access PGC staff, resource users, interested groups, and outside experts when they believe their opinions and expertise can lend value to its work.
2. From time to time, the Board may establish, in its sole discretion, special Committees to address specific areas of concern.
3. Both standing Working Groups and Committees are to help the Board in developing policy and regulation alternatives for consideration.
4. Board Working Groups or Committees may also work with the Executive Director on specific topics. However, the Board will assure that Working Groups do not conflict with the authority or direction it has delegated to the Executive Director.
5. Board Committees may be formed to monitor and evaluate organizational performance in specific areas.
6. Working Group roles and responsibilities may not be changed without the consent of the Commission president and the Working Group chair. If the two are unable to agree, the Commission president or Working Group chair may present the proposed changes to the Board of Commissioners for final resolution.

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**Board Relationship with the Executive Director**

The Board's authority to staff will be delegated through the Executive Director. Therefore, all authority and accountability of staff are considered to be authority and accountability of the Executive Director.

Such delegation will be consistent with the Board's Human Resources Policy and section 302 of the Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S. §302. Such section reads as follows:

**§ 302. Director.**

(a) **Appointment.**--The commission shall select a director. No member of the commission nor anyone who has served as a member of the commission within one year after service shall be eligible for selection as director. The director shall serve as such at the pleasure of the commission.

(b) **Compensation.**--Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the Executive Board of the Commonwealth shall fix the compensation of the director.

(c) **Function.**--The director shall be the chief administrative officer of the commission and attend to its administrative work and have charge of all activities under the jurisdiction of the commission and this title. The director shall be the chief Game Commission officer and shall direct, supervise and control all employees of the commission and report to the commission any negligence, dereliction of duty or incompetence on the part of any employee, with the facts relevant thereto, and shall make any further reports as may be required by the commission.

(d) **Certification of commission action.**--The director may certify any action of the commission as being their official act.

(e) **Publications.**--Subject to section 325 (relating to limitation on disclosure of certain records), the director may have printed such bulletins, posters, literature and other printing as may be necessary to the work of the commission, including publications of general interest to persons concerned with conservation of our natural resources. Publications and forms used to convey information, whether in electronic, print or other media format, may contain advertisements. The publications shall at all times be maintained as a nonpartisan publication.

(f) **Execution of contracts, leases and agreements.**--The director shall represent the commission in the execution of land purchase contracts and in the execution of leases and other similar agreements.

1. The Board will direct the Executive Director to meet specific expectations. These expectations will rely heavily on the Agency's strategic plan. The Board will also limit the latitude the Executive Director may use to achieve those results (See Executive Director Limitations). The Executive Director is accountable for the entire agency's meeting expectations and will be evaluated accordingly. The direction from the Board will be contained in an annual work plan developed between the Executive Director and the Board.
2. The Board will measure and evaluate the annual progress the Executive Director is making toward managing the agency, adhering to existing policies, and implementing the strategic plan. The President of the Board will coordinate the annual evaluation of the Executive Director with input from all Commissioners. In their evaluation, the Commissioners will utilize monthly and quarterly reports from the Executive Director and the annual report to the Legislature presented by the Executive Director, and any other information it deems appropriate relative to the Executive Director's job performance for the preceding year. The performance evaluation will be presented to the Executive Director in executive session at the January Commission meeting. This evaluation is considered a confidential personnel matter between the Board and the Executive Director
3. The Board expects the Executive Director to interpret its policies reasonably. To that end, the Executive Director may make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices, and develop all activities necessary to achieve the Board's policies while remaining within the limits of latitude described in #1 above.
4. The Board may change its policies at any time. By doing so, the Board could alter the specific results to be achieved and/or the boundaries within which the Executive Director must function. However, so long as a particular policy and delegation are in place, the Board will respect and support the Executive Director's choices.
5. Only decisions of the Board acting as a body are binding on the Executive Director.
6. If board members or Working Groups request information or assistance without Board authorization, the Executive Director may refuse to provide such information if in his/her judgment such a request would require inordinate use of staff time, imprudent commitment of agency resources, or loss of focus on Board policies or the strategic plan.
7. The Board expects that the Executive Director will seek its input and keep it informed in a timely manner of major personnel changes at the Bureau Director level or higher such as retirements, new hires, disciplinary activities and replacement plans.
8. The Executive Director will assure that all actions of the PGC and its staff comply with existing laws and regulations.
9. The Executive Director will assure that all staff reports made to the Board are complete, objective, accurate, honest, and compiled in accordance with the best ethical, professional, scientific, and operating practices. In addition, such reports will be presented in a manner that is understandable to the Commissioners and shall be as brief as practicable.

10. The Board expects the Executive Director to hire and promote the most qualified individuals possible. Therefore, the Executive Director will be free to hire and promote from within or outside the PGC.
11. The Executive Director will be proactive regarding the formation and enhancement of relationships and partnerships with public and private corporations, governmental agencies, non-governmental stakeholder groups, and other organizations whose interests and activities are considered beneficial to achieving the Commission's mission and fulfilling its policies. Commissioners will be informed of these initiatives and offered an opportunity to monitor them.
12. The Executive Director will continually explore and seek to implement methods designed to increase agency revenues.
13. The Executive Director will control agency expenses and perform ongoing evaluations of the usefulness of all agency assets. These assets will include real property, programs, equipment, and people. If such assets are no longer needed, the Executive Director will promptly dispose of them in a manner that is consistent with current regulations and laws.
14. The Board believes that the agency must be positively engaged in the professional development of its staff. Such development represents an essential component of the agency's future success. Staff must remain current with advances and changes in their various areas of responsibility. Staff members may represent a pool of potential management candidates. Therefore, the Executive Director will support, and encourage the further development and education of the staff for the long-term benefit of the agency, within the financial resources available. To that end, the Executive Director will report to the Board on progress with this regard in executive session at the October Commission meeting.
15. The Executive Director shall administer the budget and shall submit to the Board of Commissioners for approval any requests for donations, gifts, contributions, and grants in excess of \$15,000 annually. The Board of Commissioners will be notified in advance, in writing, of any and all cooperative agreements being pursued by the Executive Director or any Pennsylvania Game Commission staff.

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**Executive Director Limitations**

The Executive Director will not:

1. Cause or allow any Commission practice that is illegal, imprudent, unethical, or in violation of commonly accepted business or scientific practices.
2. Cause or allow the Board to receive staff information with significant gaps in timeliness, accuracy, completeness, or objectivity.
3. Cause or allow information to be withheld from the Board that may assist it in evaluating or formulating its policies.
4. Jeopardize Commission assets through inadequate maintenance, unnecessary exposure to risk, or failure to comply with regulatory requirements. It is understood that budgetary limitations may force the Executive Director to prioritize maintenance programs with the result that some items may suffer.
5. Cause Commission staff or volunteers to be exposed or subjected to unfair, undignified, or unsafe treatment or conditions.
6. Unnecessarily expose the Commission, staff, or board members to claims of liability.
7. Receive, process, or disburse funds with controls insufficient to meet the standards of the Commonwealth's audit policies and those of the applicable federal programs.
8. Fail to pay Commission expenses and settle debts in a timely manner.
9. Expose the Commission to undue financial risk or cause the Commission to incur indebtedness without prior Board approval.
10. Discourage appropriate open communication between Commissioners and staff.
11. Tolerate deterioration in Commission finances that might jeopardize programmatic needs and Commission policies.
12. Provide any donations, gifts, contributions or grants of more than \$15,000 and more than one to any grantee in a given year, except for those specifically authorized by a vote of the majority of the Commissioners. The Executive Director will provide a list of grants, gifts, contributions or cooperative agreements annually.

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**Human Resources**

This Human Resources Policy is promulgated pursuant to section 303 of the Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S. §303. To the extent that there is an inconsistency between this policy and the applicable provisions of the Civil Service Act, other Commonwealth and federal laws, regulations, policies and labor agreements, those authorities will govern.

**Appointment of Executive Director**

The Commissioners will appoint an Executive Director to serve at their pleasure, subject to existing contract terms and limitations, and, with the approval of the Executive Board, will fix the Executive Director's compensation.

**Role of Executive Director**

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the Commission and attends to its administrative work and has charge of all activities under the Commission's jurisdiction. The Executive Director is the chief wildlife conservation officer of the Commission and has charge of, directs, supervises and controls all wildlife conservation officers, deputy wildlife conservation officers and employees of the Commission. The Game and Wildlife Code has vested authority in the Executive Director, subject to the provisions of Commonwealth law, to appoint and fix the compensation of wildlife conservation officers and other Commission employees as the Executive Director deems necessary to enforce and carry out the provisions of the Game Code and to perform the functions and work of the agency.

**Establishment of the Complement**

The Executive Director or designee will manage the complement up to the approved and authorized level to meet the needs of the Commission. The Commissioners will be informed of all requests to increase the established full-time salaried complement level recommended by the Executive Director.

**Furlough**

The Commission will review and approve all requests to sanction furlough actions due to lack of work or lack of funds before official notice is provided to the Governor's Office of Administration, the affected union and non-union employees.

**Transfer of Functions**

The Commissioners will review and approve all requests to transfer functions to or from other Commonwealth agencies before an application is submitted to the Executive Board.

## **Classification and Compensation**

The Commission will utilize class specifications and pay plan established by the Executive Board. The Executive Director or designee will allocate and compensate positions to appropriate classes in accordance with generally accepted classification principles and established Commonwealth policies and procedures

## **Appointment, Promotion, Transfer, Demotion and Termination**

The Executive Director or designee will make all appointments, promotions, transfers, demotions and terminations in accordance with applicable provisions of the Civil Service Act and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, labor agreements, applicable state and federal laws, and Commonwealth policies and procedures. All employment actions will be free of all non-merit factors

## **Reorganizations**

Reorganizations involving changes to the Executive Office, Bureaus, or Divisions will require the approval of the Board of Commissioners prior to submission to the Executive Board. Establishment or closure of field offices identified on the official, published Commission organization chart also will require the prior approval of the Board before submitting the request to the Executive Board. Reorganizations involving substantive changes to organizations within any Division level, its equivalent or lower shall require the approval of the Executive Director or designee.

## **General and Standards of Conduct**

The Commission shall follow the Commonwealth's Management Directives with regard to Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Drug Free Workplace, Workplace Violence Prevention and other Human Resource programs.

## **Definitions:**

**Executive Board:** The Executive Board was established in section 204 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L. 177, No. 175) known as the Administrative Code of 1929, 71 P.S. §64. The Executive Board consists of the Governor, who shall be chair thereof, and six other heads of administrative departments to be designated from time to time by the Governor. The Secretary of Administration always functions as the Secretary of the Board.

Under various provisions contained in the Administrative Code, the Executive Board is required and has the authority to approve or disapprove a variety of administrative actions to ensure the efficient operation of state government. Two specific examples include reorganizations and changes to the pay plan. The pay plan includes all class specifications and salary plans.

**Bureau:** (taken from Governor's Management Directive 260.1, Reorganization Requests, amended June 21, 2013). The organizational unit immediately below an office or executive office, when offices are not used, and immediately above two or more divisions. Bureaus are usually established for either or both of the following reasons:

1. When there is an intra-agency need for the coordination and comprehensive management of a group of logically related functions.
2. When a basic function is of sufficient importance to deserve visibility, as a point of contact, to the public or other agencies

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#### Interaction with Staff

As Commissioners, we need to take a careful and measured approach in our official interaction with employees. We all appreciate and applaud the hard work and dedication of the Commission staff and nearly all of our interactions with employees are positive. It is important for us, as Commissioners, to work with the staff, to get to know our local and regional employees, and to foster a spirit of cooperation and open communication.

The main role of the Commissioners is to set the overall policy and direction of the Commission. The Board of Commissioners conveys such policy and direction to the staff through the Executive Director. The Executive Director is accountable for accomplishing our policy objectives. The Game Code assigns administration of staff to the Executive Director. Section 302 states:

*The director shall be the chief administrative officer of the commission and attend to its administrative work and have charge of all activities under the jurisdiction of the commission and this title. The director shall be the chief Game Commission officer and shall direct, supervise and control all employees of the commission and report to the commission any negligence, dereliction of duty or incompetence on the part of any employee, with the facts relevant thereto, and shall make any further reports as may be required by the commission.*

Commissioners should be mindful at all times that, although the Executive Director serves at the pleasure of the Commissioners, the majority of Commission staff are covered by civil service protections and statewide labor agreements. Therefore, although open communications and working with staff is encouraged, Commissioners shall not attempt to supervise or manage individual or departmental staff directly. This is not meant to preclude Commissioners from requesting information from staff. Wherever possible such requests should be made to the various Bureau or Regional Directors, so as to not disrupt staff from their normal work routines. If a Bureau or Regional Director feels that any such request is beyond their ability or authority, they should direct the Commissioners to the Executive Director. Each Commissioner shall honor such direction in a courteous manner without complaint or argument. Should a Commissioner have any grievance or complaint regarding any Commission staff member, other than the Executive Director, it shall be kept confidential and forwarded to the Executive Director or appropriate staff designated by the Executive Director for any appropriate action that may be required. No Commissioner shall attempt to address any grievance or complaint with a staff member directly. Any complaint or grievance against the Executive Director shall be brought

before the Board of Commissioners in executive session for discussion and any appropriate action that the Board deems appropriate.

Under all circumstances, we, as Commonwealth officials, should treat all employees in a respectful and professional manner. Questions about the proper role of Commissioners in dealing with supervision, management and control of employees should be directed to the Executive Director.

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### **Legislative Activities**

The Board of Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Game Commission have the general role of formulating policy and promulgating rules for hunting, wildlife management, and related activities. This role is guided by the agency mission, "To manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations." and various documents, such as the strategic plan. Frequently, the attainment of the mission and goals requires political involvement by the Commissioners and staff in order to develop and work towards passage of legislation, acquire funds, or other products. It is further recognized that Commissioners contribute valuable skills and resources in the political environment. The effective and appropriate political advocacy and actions of the Commissioners have always been vital to the success of the Game Commission.

The Commissioners and the Executive Director will work together to develop a Legislative Agenda that guides Commission and staff work for a period concurrent with the legislative calendar. The Executive Director will have the primary responsibility for conveying the Commission's Legislative Agenda to the House and Senate Game and Fisheries Committees.

The Agenda will serve as the guiding document, similar to the PGC strategic plan, in determining legislative priorities and direction. However, it needs to be recognized that the political landscape is dynamic and immediate responses on legislation outside of the approved legislative agenda are often warranted. In such situations, the Executive Director is authorized to act on behalf of the Commission. However, the actions of the Executive Director should be in conjunction with appropriate notification, input, and guidance from the President or the Executive Committee of the Board of Commissioners (President, Vice-president, and Secretary).

Throughout the legislative advocacy process the Commissioners should be careful to not make any commitments for actions of the Game Commission that are not consistent with existing statutes, policies and previously approved Board Actions.

The Board of Commissioners recognizes that open and timely communication during the entire legislative process is fundamental to our success. Information and knowledge about the issues that concern legislators, their support, lack of support, or questions about PGC legislative issues, is critical. We need to ensure that as much information as possible on legislative matters is conveyed to the Legislative Liaison or the Executive Director. It is the duty of the Legislative Liaison to work closely with the House and Senate members, their staff, and the Governor's office to convey the Commission's legislative requests and priorities and to inform the Commissioners of the status of legislative efforts.

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**Partnering and Outreach**

The Pennsylvania Game Commission's independent status is critical to fulfilling its unique mission. Its independence provides the flexibility to act upon the substantial challenges and opportunities it faces. The agency must recognize its challenges and opportunities and capitalize on its uniqueness by aggressively partnering and reaching out to external organizations that can assist it in fulfilling its mission.

The Commission also operates in a highly competitive environment. That competition may assume many forms. Some, but not all, of which include:

1. The various demands and uses imposed upon our natural resources.
2. Public access concerns.
3. The Commission's ability to attract, equip, and retain qualified employees.
4. The need to execute tasks competitively.
5. The numerous recreational alternatives available to end-users.
6. Competition from other agencies for funding, regulatory jurisdiction, and program administration.
7. Access to funding sources.

These factors represent significant, ongoing concerns. They must be met with new and creative approaches. A broad appreciation for the importance of leveraging and optimizing the allocation of the agency's assets is required to augment, enhance, and supplement its efforts.

The Commission possesses an unequalled ability to deliver conservation projects in Pennsylvania. With a highly trained staff, access to millions of acres of Commission owned and cooperator owned lands, and a backlog of potential habitat projects, often a lack of funding is the only impediment to completing these projects. Cooperating with various state, federal and non-governmental agencies has opened the door to millions of dollars in outside funding that have aided the Commission in implementing important habitat and research projects.

To that end, the Commission will continuously evaluate the advisability of partnering and reaching out to diverse public and private entities while recognizing that all decisions with this regard will be conducted in accordance with applicable rules, contracts, and regulations.

In making these decisions, the agency should consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:

1. The scale needed to economically justify performing certain tasks in house.
2. The business risk associated with internalizing certain operations and assuming the fixed costs that accompany such a decision. Partnering may result in greater budgetary flexibility through converting fixed costs to variable costs.
3. Agency operating flexibility. The merits of internalizing programs and operations relative to the cost of change should be evaluated. Such cost considerations may include the potential for operational inertia and the agency's willingness to remain current with new technologies and approaches.
4. Long term, strategic flexibility. The potential that new initiatives and policies may be difficult to embrace in the face of high fixed costs and entrenched programs should be reviewed.
5. Capital investment requirements. The benefits of utilizing someone else's capital investment and preserving the Commission's assets should always be considered. Internalization may require significant investment and reduce the flexibility with which the agency allocates its finite resources.
6. The need for ongoing investment. It is important to guard against departments and programs becoming self-perpetuating. It is also important to be mindful that substantial additional investments may be necessary to preserve the value of the original investment.
7. The importance of nurturing and maintaining access to external research, know-how, and education. The Commission has a long history of cooperating with educational institutions and contracting specific research services that should be continued.
8. The need to maintain operational balance. The agency will weigh the possibility that decisions to produce something in house might compromise other initiatives and thwart the agency's ability to proactively pursue its mission.
9. The requirement to maintain internal vigor. Vertical integration frequently means that services are delivered through a captive relationship. Such arrangements may dull the agency's willingness to change. Incentives to change and compete vigorously must be pursued and encouraged. Activities that compromise such initiatives should be avoided.
10. Timeliness. Timely execution is regarded as an essential component of the proactive pursuit of the agency's mission. The agency must avoid the possibility of unreasonable response times and lost opportunities in its competitive world by promoting the prompt and effective execution of all board policies. Comparing the time and risk associated with training, developing, and equipping the proper people versus developing partnerships and reaching out should be an ongoing aspect of this analysis.

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**Strategic Plan Development, Implementation, and  
Amendment**

Development

The Board will ensure that the Commission is always operating under a current strategic plan.

The Board will give overall guidance and direction to the priorities to be addressed in the strategic plan. The Executive Director and supporting staff should use an open, inclusive, and transparent process to develop the plan that solicits and considers input from within and outside the agency. Goals should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, and time-bound (SMART).

The Board will accept the plan by a majority vote.

Implementation

The Board expects the Executive Director to have staff develop fiscal year budgets and annual plans of work that are aligned with the strategic plan.

The Executive Director shall update the Commissioners at least quarterly on the Commission's progress in implementing the strategic plan. Such updates shall be included in quarterly written briefings from the Executive Director and oral presentations by staff and discussions during board Working Group meetings.

Amendment

Any Commissioner or staff member may recommend an amendment to the strategic plan. If Commissioner-driven, the recommendation should first be discussed with the Commission president. If staff-driven, the recommendation should flow through the staff member's bureau director to the Executive Director.

The Board president and Executive Director should discuss any proposed amendment and determine whether to offer it for consideration within the Executive and Planning Working Group. Before the Board votes on the proposed amendment at a public meeting, staff will be expected to conduct and share a detailed analysis to make sure the goal is SMART and whether and how the amendment will impact other elements of the plan.

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**Policies Carried Over From the Prior Manual**

**Extracurricular**

1. Memberships

Organizational and individual memberships to state, regional and national societies and allied conservation groups may be granted and maintained after approval from the Executive Director.

2. Holding Public Office/Other Work

Employees are not permitted to hold an elective or appointive office, or to engage in secondary employment without specific approval of the Executive Director.

3. Holding Office in Organizations

No full time employee of the Pennsylvania Game Commission shall hold any elective office in any organization in the Commonwealth that is a stakeholder in the actions or regulations of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

4. Financial Interest by Commissioners or Salaried Personnel

Any Commissioner or Agency personnel (including Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers) having financial interest in any lands or products/services proposed for purchase by the Game Commission shall give notice and explanation to the Agency before such purchase is approved.

5. Signing Petitions

Employees of the Agency shall not sign petitions of any nature pertaining to the work or positions of any conservation agency or organization.

6. Commissioner Awards

The Board of Commissioners may initiate awards to recognize significant contributions to wildlife conservation.

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**Resolutions and Positions Passed by the Board**

1. The Board of Commissioners approves the Pheasant Management Plan. Full text included in Appendix A.
2. The Commission shall have a long-term outlook with respect to leasing or sale of oil, gas and minerals. Resources should be developed over generations and not used to balance short-term budgets. Full text included in Appendix A (Marcellus Shale Resolution).
3. The Commissioners shall review and accept new species management plans. Full text included in Appendix A.
4. The Board of Commissioners supports the passage of legislation giving the authority to regulate the use of blood tracking dogs for recovering wounded or lost wildlife to the Commission. Full text included in Appendix A.
5. The Board of Commissioners directs the PGC to release the annual deer population estimates by WMU. See “Wildlife Management Unit Deer Population Characteristics and Trends” in Appendix A.
6. The Board of Commissioners supports the passage of legislation giving the authority to regulate Sunday hunting to the Commission. Full text included in Appendix A.
7. The Board of Commissioners supports legislation giving the Commission authority to transfer big game tags to mentored youth. Full text included in Appendix A.
8. The Board of Commissioners supports legislation to provide WCO’s early retirement without penalty, amending the Title 71 definition of enforcement officer. Full text included in Appendix A.
9. The Board of Commissioners adopts a position regarding legislation regarding the use of semi-automatic rifles for hunting that would remove the prohibition of their use and give the Commission authority to regulate their use. Full text included in Appendix A.

## **Appendix A**

**This Appendix contains full text of resolutions or official positions passed by the Board of Commissioners, including subsequent affirmation or nullification dates if and as applicable. Any nullified actions are retained as part of the formal record and for future reference.**

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Pheasant Management Resolution</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC October 2008
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Whereas, the plans call for the restoring, self-sustaining and huntable ring-necked pheasant population in suitable habitat by establishing wild pheasant recovery areas;</p> <p>Whereas, the Pennsylvania Game Commission seeks to provide pheasant hunting opportunities by annually producing and releasing 250,000 pheasants at PGC Game Farms and maximize their harvest by sportsmen;</p> <p>Whereas, the plan calls for the Pennsylvania Game Commission to actively inform and educate landowners and cooperators about suitable pheasant habitat, how to manage habitat areas to enhance their value to the pheasants and create pheasant habitat demonstration areas on State Game lands;</p> <p>Whereas, the plan seeks to develop partnerships to restore wild pheasants in Pennsylvania and integrate the recovery efforts with the existing game bill and state conservation programs;</p> <p>Whereas, population monitoring and research will be used to ensure the best management of pheasant resources;</p> <p>Whereas, the pheasant management plan seeks to identify sustainable funding and resources necessary to return wild pheasant populations and quality pheasant hunting in Pennsylvania;</p> <p>And whereas, the Board of Commissioners wish to thank Executive Director Carl Roe; Cal DuBrock; Bureau Director of Wildlife Management, Bob Boyd, Assistant Director; Scott Klinger; Wildlife Biologist, and all the agency employees that built a pheasant management plan that will be a model for other state to follow.</p> <p>Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Board of Commissioners, wholeheartedly support and advocate the implementation of the Ring-Necked Pheasant Management Plan for Pennsylvania for 2008 to 2017.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Marcellus Shale Resolution</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC April 2010
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Whereas there has been previous activity in the exploration of gas in the Marcellus Shale area of the Commonwealth and whereas a portion of the Marcellus Shale area falls under the State Game Lands under the control of the Pennsylvania Game Commission and</p> <p>Whereas the Pennsylvania Game Commission does not own all the oil, gas and mineral rights on some State Game Lands and whereas there is increased pressure for the development of the gas rights on public lands generating increased revenues and</p> <p>Whereas the Pennsylvania Game Commission as an independent agency that receives no appropriated funds from the State General Fund and</p> <p>Whereas the Pennsylvania Game Commission's funding is primarily based on licensees, federal grants and revenue generated from natural resources on the State Game Lands and</p> <p>Whereas the long-term affordability of the Pennsylvania Game Commission/Wildlife Commission is predicated on long-term, sustainable funding and now,</p> <p>Therefore, if involved --- that's the development of Marcellus Shale gas resources on the State Game Lands system will be accomplished with great prudence, minimum disruption to State Game Lands and replacement of disturbed land and long-term sustainability of revenue for the Wildlife Commission.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Mentored Youth Hunt Resolution</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC October 2010
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Whereas, increased youth hunting opportunities is the way to reverse the national trend of hunter recruitment.</p> <p>Whereas, Pennsylvania's Mentored Youth Hunting Program was launched in 2006 and it was an immediate success. During its first two years, nearly 103,000 mentored youths hunted with over 84,000 adult mentors.</p> <p>Whereas, those youths harvested nearly 114,000 squirrels, over 88,000 woodchucks and nearly 3,500 spring gobblers.</p> <p>Whereas, the program has been expanded since its inception, mentored youth are still limited in the species and/or sex of species they can hunt.</p> <p>Whereas, enhancing opportunities for mentored youth can lead to additional time afield, rewarding experiences for youth and mentors and improved hunter replacement ratios.</p> <p>Whereas, The Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners wish to advocate and support legislation to allow the transfer of an antlerless deer tag to a mentored youth.</p> <p>Now, therefore be it resolved that the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Board of Commissioners, wholeheartedly support the transfer of an antlerless deer tag to a mentored youth and the PGC Executive Director convey this message to the Chairman of the House Game and Fisheries Committee and the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	Wildlife Management Unit Deer Population Characteristics and Trends
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC October 2010
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Wildlife Management Unit Deer Population Characteristics and Trends. During the past year, the Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners has had discussions with staff and the public regarding THE DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION, A <i>Comprehensive Review and Evaluation</i>. The report, commonly called the DEER AUDIT, was issued by the Wildlife Management Institute in December 2009. The Commission has made significant progress in addressing the recommendations from WMI. One recommendation that we have not addressed to date is that deer population estimates be made available to the public. WMI reported that the PGC uses a scientifically valid method to calculate deer numbers. The Pennsylvania Sex-Age-Kill (PA SAK) model generates numerical estimates of population parameters for each Wildlife Management Unit.</p> <p>The Board of Commissioners wish to enact a resolution that will increase the public trust in deer management by providing annual deer population estimates and associated measures of variation. I am proposing that this information be made available for the January 2011 Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners meeting.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Sunday Hunting Resolution</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC October 2010
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Whereas, Pennsylvania has experienced consistent declines in hunting participation by both resident and non-resident hunters over the past several decades, with both the number of licenses sold and revenues generated experiencing steady declines; and</p> <p>Whereas, youth participation is vital to maintaining the long-standing tradition of hunting in Pennsylvania; We can effectively double the number of hunting days for youths during the school year by offering Sunday hunting; and</p> <p>Whereas, Sunday hunting is an effective means of recruiting new hunters and retaining current hunters by increasing the value of the hunting license through offering additional opportunities to spend time in the field; and</p> <p>Whereas, many Pennsylvania residents seek hunting opportunities and hunting leases in neighboring states that offer Sunday hunting. Sunday hunting will keep Pennsylvania hunters in Pennsylvania; and</p> <p>Whereas, Pennsylvania has a long-standing tradition of hunting camps and clubs; Sunday hunting will effectively double the number of hunting days for camp owners and club members; and</p> <p>Whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate a substantial increase in out-of-state license sales and the accompanying revenue for the Pennsylvania Game Commission; and</p> <p>Whereas, hunting license sales and their associated federal matching funds are the primary revenue source for the Pennsylvania Game Commission in carrying out its mission, including maintaining 1.5 million acres of state game lands and acquisition of additional public lands, research and management of wildlife and providing information and education to the public; and</p> <p>Whereas, Sunday hunting will provide substantial economic benefits to rural areas and businesses by increasing money spent by hunters on lodging, food, gas</p>

**Resolution Short Title:**

**Sunday Hunting Resolution**

and other incidental items; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting is expected to generate \$629 million in additional spending and create 5,300 new jobs, resulting in \$18 million in additional sales and income tax; and whereas, the mission of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is to manage wildlife and its habitat for current and future generations; and

Whereas, Sunday hunting, which is currently permitted to control a growing population of coyotes, will provide the biologists of the Pennsylvania Game Commission a new tool to manage wildlife populations; and whereas, the 43 states that currently permit Sunday hunting, have not experienced any discernable impact on the health or vibrancy of game populations; and whereas, the Board of Commissioners recognizes, the authority to permit Sunday hunting lies entirely with the General Assembly of Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, if the General Assembly repeals the restrictions on Sunday hunting, thus giving the authority to regulate Sunday hunting to the Board of Commissioners, the Board recognizes the many stakeholder groups any actions on Sunday hunting will affect and will endeavor to engage these stakeholders before passing any new regulations in regard to Sunday hunting.

Now, therefore, we, the Board of Commissioners for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, do hereby urge the General Assembly of Pennsylvania to repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Species Management Plan Approval Policy</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC February 2011
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>I would like to enter in a policy for planning as well as the approval policy for Species Management Plan and Strategic Plan. It reads as follows. To improve our site and enhance the public 5 input process of all species management plans and the strategic plan of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the Board of Commissioners is implementing the following policy.</p> <p>Prior to implementation, all species management plans and the strategic plan shall be reviewed and approved by the following process. The Executive Director will inform the Board of the agency's intentions to develop a species management plan or strategic plan. Upon completion of a species management plan or strategic plan, the Executive Director, Director of the Bureau of Wildlife Management or his representative will present the goal and objectives of the plan to the Board. This document will be known as a preliminary plan.</p> <p>The preliminary plan will be posted on the PGC website for public comment until the next official Board meeting. A final version of the plan along with all the public comments will be distributed to the Board of Commissioners at least seven days prior to the next Board meeting. During the next public meeting the Board of Commissioners will vote to accept the plan or return it for revision.</p> <p>Following acceptance of the plan any subsequent changes to the plan's goals and/or objectives will be subject to Board approval. I would like to enter that into the Board's policies.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Tracking Dog Resolution</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	Passed by the BOC June 2010
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Whereas the Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners generally supports the idea of allowing a leashed tracking dog to be used to track white-tailed deer in an attempt to recover animals which have been legally killed or wounded during the open season, the white- tailed deer, and</p> <p>Whereas this procedure is legal in most surrounding states and seems to be working satisfactorily, and</p> <p>Whereas House Bill 2526 has been introduced in the Pennsylvania legislature and will allow such tracking dog activity, and</p> <p>Whereas many hunters and dog handlers have requested that this Board support passage of House Bill 2526 by the legislature,</p> <p>Therefore be it resolved that the Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners supports and encourages the passage of House Bill 2526 by the Pennsylvania legislature and directs Game Commission staff to work with legislators toward that end.</p> <p>And therefore, I move that we adopt this resolution.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Support WCO Early Retirement without Penalty (Title 71)</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	June 31, 2015
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>The Board of Commissioners would encourage the legislators to amend Title 71 to include our WCOs in the definition of law enforcement officers with regard to early retirement without penalty legislation.</p> <p>We believe that our conservation officers deserve the same benefits that are currently being offered to other law enforcement officers in the Commonwealth, including those Conservation Officers currently working with Fish and Boat Commission.</p> <p>So we'd just like to extend that benefit for our WCOs.</p>

<b>Resolution Short Title:</b>	<b>Position on Use of Semi-Automatic Rifles for Hunting</b>
<b>Original Adoption Date:</b>	June 30, 2015
<b>Affirmation Date(s):</b>	
<b>Nullification Date(s):</b>	
<b>Full Text:</b>	<p>Pennsylvania is one of the last two states that doesn't allow some form of hunting with semi-automatic firearms.</p> <p>It appears to the Board of Commissioners that some form of legislation regarding semi-automatic firearms will pass. There is a lot of support for it, and there are various bills introduced that provide for various caliber restrictions, magazine restrictions, and restrictions on species that may be hunted.</p> <p>The preferred course of action would be to, from the Board of Commissioners' standpoint, to have the Commission be given authority to regulate the use of semi-automatic rifles as opposed to some specific legislation that specifies one or two species, because should the Board want to expand usage in the future, we would need additional legislative approval to do it.</p> <p>Legislators and their staffs have asked for our comments on use of semi-automatic rifles for hunting; our support is for a bill that simply gives the Commission the authority to regulate the use semi- automatic rifles.</p>

# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

## Game Commission Policy Statement

### BALANCED MANAGEMENT

The Board of Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Game Commission adheres to a “Balanced Management” philosophy that is described by the Commission’s mission statement and that of the Game Code as well as the Commission’s fundamental role in fulfilling and supporting the provisions of Article 1, Section 27 (Natural Resources and Public Estate) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

It represents:

1. The Commissioners’ belief in the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s mission statement “*Managing wildlife and its habitat for current and future generations*”.
2. The concept that in order to properly manage the wildlife resources of Pennsylvania the Board must find a balance between purely scientific management, its stakeholders’ needs and desires and the political concerns of the citizens of the Commonwealth.
3. The Commissioners’ expectation that the agency’s activities, regulations, and methods will be true to the balanced management philosophy.

The Commissioners also recognizes the challenge of managing all of the wildlife populations in the state when balancing one species in relation to another and the impacts of all species on the environment and the citizens of the Commonwealth. Some species may be managed to minimize impacts to other species, some species may be managed to minimize impacts to humans (social carrying capacity).

The Commissioners expect this philosophy to:

1. Balance scientific management of the Commonwealth’s wildlife resources with maximizing hunting and wildlife related opportunities.
2. Lead to improved methods of allocating the agency’s limited financial resources.
3. Support the discovery and implementations of new, scientifically-based approaches to wildlife habitat and population restoration.
4. Provide the basis for protecting and enhancing viable wildlife populations and other resources under the agency’s jurisdiction.

The “Balanced Management” philosophy further establishes the ethical principle that the Commission’s primary role is that of a wildlife management organization. Accordingly, its responsibility must balance hunting and wildlife related opportunities to the public with the best available science. In striving to establish a balance through optimizing those opportunities while maintaining a commitment to good science throughout the Commonwealth, the Commissioners remain true to the agency’s mission.

It also establishes the firm expectation that the Commission will:

1. Not engage in or support activities or regulations that may bring undue harm to its wildlife resources, the Commonwealth's long-standing hunting and outdoor traditions and current and future generations of citizens' need for sustainable wildlife resources.
2. Constantly strive to develop and improve upon its ability to make balanced decisions on the impact of various regulations and practices on the wildlife resources, hunting and non-hunting citizens of the state.

Should doubt or confusion arise regarding this priority, the Commission will:

1. Opt for the more conservative position of protecting, conserving, and enhancing the wildlife resource and their habitats.
2. Develop all of its activities in a scientifically supportable manner that is consistent with this philosophy and the most currently available research.
3. Implement changes, whenever feasible, in its regulations and practices to eliminate such doubt or confusion.

Example:

A Balanced Management strategy demands continual assessment of the wildlife resources, latest scientific management practices, evaluation of the impact of hunting pressure on that resource, needs and interests of hunting license buyers and a commitment to making changes as conditions dictate. Such changes will be directed toward insuring that the diverse wildlife resources of the Commonwealth become and remain the best attainable consistent with the social and environmental stresses placed upon them.

This approach recognizes that it is impossible to set specific numerical objectives for all the varied wildlife populations in the Commonwealth. It therefore mandates the Board receive sound wildlife management advice and professional judgment of the staff, the most current and detailed information available on the hunting license buyers and the diverse interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth.



# PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION

## Policy Manual Checklist: Summary of Action Items and Dates

BOC Action	ED Action	When Required?	What is Required?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Continuous	Ensure that the Commission has a current strategic plan and is implementing it
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarterly	The BOC President and ED collaborate on final agenda for Board meetings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		January	Elect BOC officers annually at regularly scheduled January meeting per statute
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		As Needed	Per Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S. §302, appoint ED and set compensation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annually - January	BOC establishes ED's annual work plan; developed cooperatively between the ED and the BOC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annually - January	President of the BOC coordinates annual evaluation of the ED with input from all Commissioners. BOC presents ED's performance evaluation in executive session at the January Commission meeting.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monthly & Quarterly	ED presents written monthly status reports to BOC and briefs the BOC (specific Strategic Plan progress report quarterly) – used as an input in evaluating ED performance
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	As Needed	ED to seek BOC input and keep it informed of major personnel changes at the Bureau Director level or higher
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	October	ED will support and encourage development and education of staff for the long-term benefit of the agency. ED will report to the Board on progress regarding staff development in executive session at the October Commission meeting.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annually	The ED will provide BOC a list of grants, gifts, contributions or cooperative agreements annually.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	As Needed	ED has BOC review and approve all requests to sanction furlough actions due to lack of work or funds before official notice is provided to Governor's Office of Admin.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		As Needed	The BOC shall review and approve all requests to transfer functions to or from other Commonwealth agencies before an application is submitted to the <i>Executive Board</i> *
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		As Needed	Reorganizations involving changes to the Executive Office, Bureaus, or Divisions, or establishment or closure of field offices will require the approval of the BOC prior to submission to the <i>Executive Board</i> .*
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annually – Concurrent with Legis. Calendar	The BOC and ED will work together to develop a Legislative Agenda that guides Commission and staff work for a period concurrent with the legislative calendar. The ED will have the primary responsibility for conveying the Commission's Legislative Agenda to the House and Senate Game and Fisheries Committees.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annually	The ED shall have staff develop fiscal year budgets and annual plans of work that are aligned with the strategic plan.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarterly	The ED shall update the BOC at least quarterly on progress in implementing the strategic plan. Progress to be included in quarterly written briefings from the ED and oral presentations by staff and discussions during Working Group meetings.

\*The *Executive Board* consists of the Governor, who shall be chair thereof, and six other heads of administrative departments to be designated from time to time by the Governor.