

MEMORANDUM

To: Member of the House of Representatives

From: Representative Lawrence H. Curry

Date: January 19, 2011

Subject: Co-Sponsorship – **(Former HB 621) Declaring the Eastern Box Turtle as the State Reptile**

I plan to re-introduce former (HB 621) naming the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) as the state reptile.

Turtles have lived on Earth for over 250 million years. For much of America's history turtles have lived in abundance in Pennsylvania. The bottom shell of the box turtle has the unique ability to hinge, which allows the turtle to pull its entire body into its shell, sealing itself tighter than a "box." This distinctive feature provided the Eastern Box Turtle with its name.

Recently the number of turtles has begun to decrease. In particular, the population of Pennsylvania native Eastern Box Turtles has dropped dramatically. This drop can be explained by the turtle's difficulty in mating, females do not reach maturity until 10 or 12 years old and only have clutches of 2 to 4 eggs. Pesticides and other forms of pollution have made matters worse. In addition, thousands of turtles were taken from the wild and kept as pets. Some reports state that the Eastern Box turtle may become extinct from Pennsylvania within the next 50 years.

By proclaiming the Eastern Box Turtle as the state's reptile, I hope to bring attention to the plight of the Eastern Box Turtle and hope to educate the public in the need to protect this important native species.

If you would like to join me in co-sponsoring this resolution please contact Nancy Porvaznik via e-mail nporvazn@pahouse.net or by phone at (717) 783-1079/ In-house Ext # 6532.

Previous co-sponsors for Former HB 621 as follows:

CURRY , BEYER , BRENNAN , DiGIROLAMO , FLECK , GEIST , HARRIS , HENNESSEY , HESS , HUTCHINSON , McCALL , MELIO , M. O'BRIEN , SIPTROTH , K. SMITH , VULAKOVICH , YOUNGBLOOD , MURT and CALTAGIRONE