

1997-98 SESSION
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

Committee Name:

Senate Committee on
Agriculture and
Environmental
Resources
(SC-AER)

Sample:

- Record of Comm. Proceedings
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01a
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt01b
- 97hrAC-EdR_RCP_pt02

- Appointments ... Appt
-
- Clearinghouse Rules ... CRule
-
- Committee Hearings ... CH
-
- Committee Reports ... CR
-
- Executive Sessions ... ES
-
- Hearing Records ... HR
- 97hr_ab0755
-
- Miscellaneous ... Misc
-
- Record of Comm. Proceedings ... RCP
-



Winnebago County

W I S C O N S I N

The Wave of the Future

JAMES G. LAUSON
Winnebago County
Supervisor
District #10

1130 Honeysuckle Lane
Neenah, WI 54956

Senator, Alice Clausing, Chairperson
Members, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environmental Resources

February 24, 1998

I have been involved in county government for close to 16 years, serving as an elected official to the Winnebago County Board of Supervisors. For all of these 16 years I have served as a Parks and Recreation committee member and have been Chairman of this committee for the past 12 years. It is my strong belief that finally, a Bill is being introduced that can truly help and aid local government and businesses in the permitting process for large and small excavating and shoreline improvement projects. I was pleased that this proposal was passed by the Assembly on a unanimous vote, with few amendments.

AB755 will help streamline, shorten, and simplify the approval process now in place that regulates permitting of these types of projects. Over the years, Winnebago County has taken on many shoreline restoration projects; boat launching improvements, shoreline repair projects, dredging, and grading, and correcting drainage problems. In doing so we have run into problems or costly delays throughout the permitting process. With the passage of AB755 these barriers will be greatly reduced, saving the taxpayer untold time and dollars. Also I would point out that the integrity of the present WDNR rules guiding these projects will be maintained. That fact in itself would be reason to approve this bill. The creation of a five year pilot program, will in my opinion lead to better planning and better management practices, and in time will save time and dollars.

Finally, a sound and practical adjustment to the way we do business, for the betterment of our taxpaying constituents.

Also I would like to inform you, that Winnebago County's Legislative Committee, which I am also Chairman of, has passed by a unanimous vote to support AB755 and will be forwarded to the full County Board for its approval at the March meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your consideration of this fine piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

James G. Lauson II
Chairman; Winnebago County
Parks & Recreation Committee, &
Legislative Committee

March 4, 1998

Senator Alice Clausung, Chairperson
Members, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

My name is Jeff Christensen and I am currently an employee at Radtke Contractors, Inc. of Winneconne. Radtke Contractors, Inc., is a marine and excavating company that has been in business since 1965. Prior to this I was a DNR employee for three years and the director of Parks for Winnebago County for 22 ½ years. During my tenure with the County, and at Radtkes as permit coordinator, I have had the opportunity to be involved with the Chap. 30 permit application process. Over the years I have observed that the permit application process seems to take longer and there are less DNR staff available to do the work. The limitations associated with the current permitting process are evident to the general public, contractors, and DNR staff. It is a system that needs to be modified and many of us have been wondering what the best way would be to accomplish this. The solution to many of the problems encountered in the current permitting process would be to create a general permitting structure that would recognize the specific nature of the waterway involved and the rights of the riparian property owners to utilize the water resource.

The geographic area described in the bill is an ideal area to use as a pilot program base. This area is one of the faster growing regions in the State and has a water resource that is second to none. The Lake Winnebago Chain and associated waters provide almost 170,000 acres of surface waters with approximately 200 miles of shoreline. The nature of our waterways not only makes this area of the state unique, but is the reason why construction practices and structures different from what is the standard in other inland lake regions must be utilized here. Structures must be built for durability—wind, big waves, ice shoves, high levels of boat traffic, and big boats that generate large wakes all contribute to the need for well constructed and enduring structures. How we can protect the resource and satisfy the needs of riparian owners, whether private or public, is a challenge for everyone involved in this waterway system. This challenge can be met by the thoughtful development of a general permitting program.

Our company has had the distinct pleasure of working with DNR staff and area legislators to help develop the general permit program for this area of the State. The foundation of the bill before you is one of reasonable compromise. We all agree that the program is needed and a pilot program of this type would offer the following advantages over the current permit process:

1. Time delays normally associated with the current permitting process should be all but eliminated once the general permit structure is in place. A streamlined procedure will allow riparians greater flexibility in planning their work and decrease permitting costs.
2. The general permit program will help remove the DNR from the adversarial role in the permit process and will allow the Department to posture itself as a service oriented agency.
3. Having a general permit structure in place will provide uniformity in the decision making process for DNR field staff and provide continuity should staff changes occur.
4. A general permit program should decrease the amount of DNR staff time and resources needed to review a project and provide greater efficiency in all phases of the permit issuance procedure. This will allow employees to direct their energy and staff time to other programs.
5. The general permit process will allow the Department to determine the type of structures to be placed in a geographic area of similar characteristics. This should enhance the Department's ability to determine structure compatibility in relation to the resource, and will foster improved long term resource management techniques that recognize riparian rights, desires, and effects.

The proposed general permit system has been developed in the spirit of cooperation and is mutually beneficial to all the parties involved. I fully support AB 755 and would respectfully request that you give full support to this program and vote in favor of AB 755.

March 4, 1998

Senator Alice Clausing, Chairperson
Members, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

My name is Tom Radtke and I am president of Radtke Contractors, Inc. Our company is a marine and excavating firm located in Winneconne that has been in business for 33 years. My father began the business in 1965 primarily focusing on pond construction, wildlife projects, channel and ditching work, and some marine work. Over the years we have grown to become a major contractor in the area with 55 employees. Marine work consisting of piers, wharves, sea walls, pile clusters, boat lifts and rip rap has become a primary part of our business. We are constantly re-engineering our construction practices to provide the structures our clients need to fully enjoy our water resources in the most environmentally sound manner. Our structures not only protect waterfront property and enhance the recreational use of our waterways, but also benefit the environment by reducing erosion, filtering surface water runoff, and providing structure and protection for fish and wildlife.

Our area of the State is blessed with tremendous water resources. Lake Winnebago, Lake Butte des Morts, Lake Winneconne, Lake Poygan, and the Fox and Wolf Rivers cover 170,000 acres, approximately 17% of the total inland lake area in Wisconsin. Our company provides a large share of the permit applications that DNR staff in this area have to process, approximately 6% of the State permit load. In 1996 we applied for 80 permits, in 1997 the number rose to 86. Over the years we have noticed that the number of DNR staff has decreased, and the cost to do permits, as well as the time involved in permit processing, has increased.

My father and I have talked to the DNR regarding this situation on many occasions. Recently it was decided that rather than trying to do this alone, local legislators would be enlisted to assist us in modifying the existing permit program. The bill before you is a result of cooperative and open dialog between legislators, private individuals, and the DNR. This bill will modify the existing permit process and make it more efficient and cost effective for the DNR, contractors, and property owners. I fully support this bill and would with all sincerity, respectfully request that you give full support to this program.