



**Carol Roessler**  
STATE SENATOR

TO: Senator James Baumgart and members of the Senate Committee on  
Environmental Resources

FROM: Senator Carol Roessler

DATE: January 10, 2002

RE: Senate Bill 317 – Sturgeon Spearing

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**The Problem**

Due to the long reproductive cycle of the prehistoric sturgeon fish and coupled with the increased interest and enthusiasm in sturgeon spearing in the last few years, the sturgeon population is in need of protection. Adult female sturgeons, which are critical to the survival of the species, take up to 25 years before they spawn and then they only hatch eggs once every 4 or 5 years. In addition, in the 2001 sturgeon season 36,000 spearing tags were issued which is triple the 12,000 issued in 1994.

DNR has recognized the urgency to curtail the sturgeon harvest and has implemented an emergency rule for the sturgeon season to start on February 9, 2002. This rule limits the harvesting of sturgeon to the hours of 6:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**The Solution**

The solution is to limit the number of sturgeon spearing tags issued by increasing the price and removing the sturgeon-spearing license from the patron license.

**Senate Bill 317**

Senate Bill 317 has four components to help preserve the sturgeon population:

1. SB 317 increases the fee for residents to \$39.25 and nonresidents to \$199.25. Currently both resident and nonresident licenses are \$9.25.
2. All moneys received by the DNR for these licenses would be used for assessing and managing lake sturgeon stock and fishery, improving and maintaining the lake sturgeon habitat, and administering the issuance of licenses.
3. The bill would remove the privileges of the sturgeon-spearing license from the patron license.
4. And, the bill would eliminate the requirement that you must hold a resident or nonresident fishing license to be issued a sturgeon-spearing license.

**Support**

The Sturgeon Advisory Committee and DNR advanced the components of Senate Bill 317 for my review and introduction as legislation. The DNR and the Sturgeon Advisory Committee continue to be strong advocates and supporters of SB 317. DNR will be testifying in support of this bill. The Sturgeon Advisory Committee, a committee comprised of about 35 members representing various fishing organizations, supports the bill and took votes on several components of SB 317. Here are the Sturgeon Advisory Committee vote counts:

- Recommendation for raising the sturgeon-spearing fee to \$39.25 for residents and \$200 for nonresidents was supported on a 27-3 vote.
- To remove the sturgeon spearing tag from the patron license supported 26-2
- Eliminating the requirement to hold a fishing license in addition to the sturgeon tag received a 29-0 positive vote.

W. McALOON  
6488 E. DECORAH

# Otter Street Fishing Club

P.O. Box 271 • 1210 Ceape Avenue  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54902

DEC 21 2001

# Otter Street Fishing Club

P.O. Box 271 • 1210 Ceape Avenue  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54902



12-19-01

SENATOR ROESSLER,

LAST THURSDAY AT OUR REGULAR MEETING WE DISCUSSED THE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF STURGEON SPEARING.

WE ARE VERY THANKFUL FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THE ASSEMBLY BILL'S THAT WILL HOPEFULLY SAVE THE SPORT OF STURGEON SPEARING.

I THINK THAT EVERY TRUE SPORTS PERSON REALIZES THAT WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION NOW.

LET'S HOPE THAT ANY OPPOSITION SEES THE LIGHT.

SINCERELY YOURS,  
William McAloon  
PRESIDENT OTTER ST.  
FISHING CLUB

McAloon, William

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DEC 17 2001

John Jurgenson  
1061 Reed St.  
Neenah, WI. 54956  
Dec. 14, 2001

Senator Carol Roesler  
P.O. Box 7882  
Madison WI. 53707-7882

R.E. Senate Bill SB 317

The Honorable Carol Roesler

I am writing to indicate my strong support of this Legislation and make the following comments.

I support the license fee increase and removal of the license from the patron license. I feel this will reduce the number of non Sturgeon fishermen holding tags which contributes to group bagging an illegal practice.

In regards to the revenue generated from these license, I feel all revenue of the DNR. should be allocated by the budget process of the department.

I am a member of the Sturgeon Advisory Committee and have fished Sturgeon for sixty years.

Respectfully Submitted

John Jurgenson

C.C. Senator M. Ellis

Representative Dean Kaufert

**Asbjornson, Karen**

**From:** Jermstad, Sara  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 03, 2002 10:45  
**To:** Asbjornson, Karen  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Bill 317  
 CR email

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DK2635@aol.com [mailto:DK2635@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 02, 2002 10:28 AM  
**To:** Sen.Roessler@legis.state.wi.us  
**Cc:** Rep.Kaufert@legis.state.wi.us; Sen.Baumgart@legis.state.wi.us  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 317

This is a revision of the e-mail from 12-19-01

On the four points of Senate Bill 317, these are my comments:

1. The removal of the spearing tag from the conservation patron license.

I totally agree as there are now over 77,000 patron license sold and many are considering this a free tag, hoping to find an open fish shanty to sit in or somebody to fill that tag.

2. Disassociating the spearing license from the fishing license.

I totally agree with this as we cannot fish through a sturgeon fishing hole anyway as of 1993.

3. Increasing the spearing license fee to \$39.25 for residents and \$199.25 for nonresidents.

On this I agree as the Sturgeon Advisory Committee voted 26 to 2 to use this increase in sturgeon spearing licenses to deter some people who could take the sport or leave it. We are overharvesting our adult female sturgeon and we have to reduce the participation. If there is any reluctance by the legislature to accept this fee, I would consider the resident license to be \$29.25 and no less than \$25.00. This is a 3 fold increase whereas what is proposed is a 4 fold increase. The analogy here is "how much is a sturgeon worth?" It is certainly worth more than \$10 the current fee. A deer license is \$20 and a bear license is \$41. An adult sturgeon is as much a trophy as a bear, especially with the harvest cap which was reached in two days the last two years.

There will be people saying "what do you do if you have two or three kids that want to spear? They can't afford it". My answer is "what is their priority? They pay big bucks for designer jeans, CD's and name brand tennis shoes. They can save up during the year, raking lawns, shoveling sidewalks and mowing lawns, etc. to earn money for a sturgeon spearing license". We know that a substantial fee increase will reduce the number of people currently interested in spearing because the spearing license came along with the conservation patron license.

4. Requiring all revenues from sturgeon spearing license sales to be used only for the Winnebago Sturgeon Management Program.

With this I totally agree as we currently have a \$30,000 budget to cover all sturgeon management programs, assessments and research. We have an ambitious program to radio tag adult females on the river next spring and have monitors placed on bridges to track their migration back to Lake Winnebago or the upper lakes. This would prove one way or the other whether some of these fish stay in the river for a period of time or return to the up river lakes or return to Lake Winnebago. This project will be very costly and thanks to Sturgeon For Tomorrow we can do some of this work but all the money needed for this project is not there in the budget.

Dick Koerner  
 Sturgeon Advisory Committee  
 540 Sunrise Bay Road  
 Neenah, WI 54956

01/07/2002

2001 Dec 19

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Phone (920) 722-0433

E-Mail DK2635@aol.com

**Asbjornson, Karen**

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**From:** Larry Margelofsky  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 20, 2001 8:35 AM  
**To:** sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us  
**Cc:** Ron Bruch  
**Subject:** SB317

Dear Senator Carol Roessler,

I'm repeating a copy of my letter sent to you on June 19, 2001, just in case you may have missed it.

In addition to the letter if it will help I would like to be at the January meeting to say a few words or to try and answer any questions. I can also bring more people along if it will help. Please let me know so I may begin coordinating the trip to Madison. Please let me know when and where.

Again, not passing this bill now would be a major underachievement for us all.

P.S. We thank you and your husband for helping us make the Radford Village green! As you were irrigating as we were finishing up. It worked out great! Thanks again.

Dear Senator Carol Roessler,

I am writing to commend and thank you on your prompt action regarding the price of sturgeon spearing licenses and removal from the Conservation Patrons License.

I have been an avid sturgeon spearer for 26 years and an avid sportsman for the last 28 years. Just recently I had the opportunity to become part of the Sturgeon Advisory Committee. As in any walk of life when we reach a decision on something for the better we say "why didnt we do that years ago"? I have wanted sturgeon licenses to be removed from the Patron Licenses for many years. Also the price of the license just needed to catch up to the real world, rather than give the impression that the sturgeon is less than an actual resource.

The sturgeon, of course, need special attention and micromanagement. To do any less than what has been proposed would be a dramatic underachievement for all of us! Within the micromanagement of the sturgeon in at least the next 30 years there will be many adjustments that will have to be made. The sturgeon will need to be monitored very closely. I have the confidence that with Ron Bruch of the Department of Natural Resources closely monitoring the sturgeon and with help and input from the concerned public, and with a caring person like yourself that knows how to make things happen, it can only turn out to be a win-win situation for the resource and the public.

I also have the confidence that with the proper allocation of license fees, local organizations will continue and improve their financial support.

Thank you very much from someone who cares.

Sincerely,

Stuart Muche  
N9108 Lakeshore Drive  
Van Dyne, WI 54979  
DBA Stuart's Landscaping and Garden Center Inc.  
N7820 Lakeshore Drive  
Fond du lac, WI 54937



12/20/2001

R. O. PARSONS  
P.O. BOX 36  
STOCKBRIDGE, WI 53088

Dec 17-01

rol Raessler

DEC 18 2001

Madison Wi.

TO: Senator Raessler

This note is to inform you that we are very interested in the passing of Bill SB 317 and AB 251.

Long time sturgeon spearer.

Robert Parsons

Rosimay Parson

P.O. Box 36

Stockbridge Wi. 53088

Parsons, Robert

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**Asbjornson, Karen**

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**From:** Jermstad, Sara  
**Sent:** Friday, December 21, 2001 10:20  
**To:** Asbjornson, Karen  
**Subject:** FW: Bill Sb317

CR email...not constit, but he's in forward

-----Original Message-----

**From:** D. Mielke [mailto:ameri@athenet.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 21, 2001 11:58 AM  
**To:** Sen Roessler  
**Subject:** Bill Sb317

Sen Roessler

I am Don Mielke, I live on the north shore of Lake Winnebago and have fished sturgeon for 32 years. Members of the Lower Cliff Fishing Club which I have been on the board for 26 years strongly urge for you to support this bill. Fishing Sturgeon is a great sport and we have taken it for granted for to many years. Raising the fees is needed to bring out the priveage of the sport. Even the youth that are making 6 dollars an hour should have to work for a 8 hour day for the right to get involved in this sport.

Thank You  
Don Mielke

Mielke, Don

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**Asbjornson, Karen**

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**From:** Jermstad, Sara  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 12, 2001 12:01 PM  
**To:** Asbjornson, Karen  
**Subject:** FW: SB 317 and AB 251

CR email

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Harry Kachur [mailto:gcc-hkachuer@hbs.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 12, 2001 11:49 AM  
**To:** 'sen.roessler@legis.state.wi.us'  
**Subject:** SB 317 and AB 251

Senator Roessler

I am writing in support of the bill SB 317 co-sponsored by you and Senator Ellis.

I am a member of the Sturgeon Advisory Committee representing Montgomery Beach Sportsman Club, and the DNR Sturgeon Management Assessment Team, representing the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. As you can see, I have a strong interest in Lake Sturgeon and the protection of the population for future generations.

I feel the items in your bill are very beneficial to the population of the Winnebago sturgeon.

The license fee increase has been long sought after by the SAC members. The proposed \$39.25 resident and \$199.25 non-resident is the same as a bear kill license. It is only right to mirror the bear kill license fee, as both are trophies. This would also discourage the practice amongst some to buy everyone in their family and neighbors a license so they could continue to spear. Increasing the fee should stop a lot of that.

The same goes for removing the license from the conservation Patrons license. Some spearkers, after spearing a fish, call their buddies with an

*Kachur, Harry*

*Q*

unused and never intended to be used CP sturgeon tag and they tag the fish, allowing the guy to continue spearing.

Removing the connection between the fishing and spearing license makes sense, as spearers have not been allowed to fish in their shanties while spearing since 1993.

The requirement that all sturgeon spearing license funds be used for the Winnebago sturgeon management program is also a good thing.

I also strongly urge that somehow we get AB 251 (early license sales, which I believe you co-sponsored) passed and signed this session. I have been supporting this idea for years. It finally made it into bill form but it

has been held up, for whatever reason, the last two years. The bill has been in the Environmental resources committee since October 18, 2001. The

most frustrating part of this is that absolutely no one opposes this bill.

Both of these bills are extremely important to the future population of sturgeon in the Winnebago system and I urge passage of both this session.

Harry Kachur gcc-hkachur@hbs.net  
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation  
Sturgeon Advisory Committee  
Sturgeon for Tomorrow  
Montgomery Beach Sportsman Club  
WDNR Sturgeon Management Assessment Team

## **Henderson, Patrick**

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**From:** Bruch, Ronald M  
**Sent:** Monday, January 14, 2002 10:30 AM  
**To:** Sen. Dale Schultz; Sen. Dave Hansen; Sen. Jim Baumgart; Sen. Robert Cowles; Sen. Robert Wirch  
**Cc:** Sen. Roessler; Rep. Kaufert  
**Subject:** SB317 - Hearing Testimony Summary - Ron Bruch

To: The members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Resources

Dear Sirs,

Attached is a summary of my testimony to your committee made last Thursday, including information requested by committee members during your hearing on SB317, regarding proposed changes to the Lake Winnebago Sturgeon Spearing license.

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify and answer your questions. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or information needs you may have.

Yours,

Ron Bruch  
Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist - DNR

(I have attached the summary as a Word document, and have inserted it below into this message)



SB317 Summary of  
testimony of ...

### **Summary of testimony of Ronald M. Bruch, WI DNR Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist before the Senate Committee on Environmental Resources, January 10, 2002; and response to specific questions and information requests from Committee Senators on:**

#### **SB317 - Relating to sturgeon spearing licenses; the sturgeon stock, fishery and habitat in the Lake Winnebago and upper Fox and Wolf Rivers system; and making an appropriation**

- The actions embodied in SB317 were proposed by the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee, a 29 member group of representatives of conservation organizations from throughout the Winnebago region including three members of the Conservation Congress with one person from the Executive Council of the Conservation Congress.
- The Winnebago System stock of lake sturgeon, while still the largest and most productive lake sturgeon stock in the world, has been overexploited recently due to dramatic increases in the number of sturgeon spearmen and sturgeon harvests over the last decade.
- The WI DNR working with the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee, has since 1992, developed and enacted a series of administrative rule changes to help control the harvest, including a harvest cap system put in place in 1999.
- A 3 fold increase in sturgeon spearing license tag issuance since 1994 has continued to cause serious overharvest problems - 12,143 tags issued in 1994 to 36,159 issued in 2001.
- Although the number of tags issued to persons from outside the Winnebago region has increased over the last 5 years, the fishery

- is still primarily comprised of persons living in close proximity to Lake Winnebago - in 2001 87% of all fish registered were harvested by people living in the counties closest to Lake Winnebago. *{Spearers are required by law to register their fish the same day they spear it}*
- A Sturgeon spearing license tag costs \$9.25 and has not been increased since 1992. The relatively low tag cost coupled with the large number of conservation patron license holders requesting a sturgeon spearing tag (30,052 in 2001) has led to a proliferation of "extra" tags in the fishery and serious illegal group bagging, which in turn contributes to overharvest.
  - No more than 5% of the lake sturgeon spawning stock can be harvested each year without jeopardizing the population (compared to 25% to 30% of a walleye or bass stock).
  - The ultimate harvest control mechanism would be a lottery system, but Winnebago sturgeon spearers are adamantly opposed to a lottery at this time.
  - In lieu of a lottery system the Winnebago sturgeon spearers, through the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee, have recommended the actions embodied in SB317 to help control spearing effort and harvest.
  - **In the event we need to implement a lottery in the future to control the sturgeon spear harvest, the actions called for in SB317 would need to be in place first before a lottery can be instituted.**

Prepared by Ron Bruch, WI DNR Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist, 920-424-3059, bruchr@dnr.state.wi.us

**Ron Bruch**

Senior Fisheries Biologist  
920-424-3059 (phone)  
920-424-4404 (fax)  
bruchr@dnr.state.wi.us

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Prepared by Ron Bruch, WI DNR Winnebago Sturgeon Biologist, 920-424-3059, bruchr@dnr.state.wi.us

**Ron Bruch**  
Senior Fisheries Biologist  
920-424-3059 (phone)  
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## **SENATOR ROESSLER TESTIMONY ON SB 317/AB 251**

**THANK YOU SENATOR BAUMGART FOR SCHEDULING THE HEARING ON MY BILL (SB 317) AND REPRESENTATIVE KAUFERT'S BILL (AB 251) AND FOR GROUPING THESE TWO BILLS THAT RELATE TO STURGEON ISSUES.**

**BLURB ON AB 251 -**

**I CONCUR WITH REPRESENTATIVE KAUFERT THAT PASSAGE OF AB 251 WOULD FURTHER PROTECT THE STURGEON POPULATION.... REFER TO TALKING PTS.**

**NOW, I WANT TO URGE YOUR SUPPORT OF MY BILL - SB 317. SENATE BILL 317 DOES 4 BASIC THINGS:**

- 1. INCREASES THE FEE FROM \$9.25 TO \$39.25 FOR RESIDENTS AND \$199.25 FOR NONRESIDENTS.**
- 2. REMOVES THE STURGEON-SPEARING LICENSE FROM THE PATRON LICENSE.**
- 3. ELIMINATES THE REQUIREMENT TO HOLD A FISHING LICENSE TO BE ISSUED A STURGEON LICENSE.**
- 4. REQUIRES DNR TO USE MONEY RECEIVED FROM STURGEON SALES FOR ASSESSING, MANAGING, IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING STURGEON STOCK AND FISHERY.**

**THE STURGEON ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND RON BRUCH, FROM THE DNR, FORWARDED THE 4 COMPONENTS OF SB 317 TO ME. THE STURGEON ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 35 INDIVIDUALS WHO EACH INDIVIDUALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMITTEE AND ARE REPRESENTATIVES FOR FISHING OR**

SPORTSMANSHIP ORGANIZATIONS. THIS COMMITTEE'S MEMBERSHIP HAS A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE ON STURGEON ISSUES. THUS, I INTRODUCED SB 317 WHEN THE COMMITTEE FORWARDED ME THIS PACKAGE THAT WAS VOTED ON AND SUPPORTED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE STURGEON ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

DNR RECENTLY IMPOSED AN EMERGENCY RULE TO LIMIT THE TIME LIMIT FOR SPEARING TO 6:30-12:30 IN AN EFFORT TO PROTECT THIS TROPHY FISH POPULATION WHEN THE SEASON OPENS ON FEBRUARY 9<sup>TH</sup>. THIS EMERGENCY RULE IS TRULY A RED FLAG THAT WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO LIMIT THE STURGEON HARVEST BEFORE WE LOSE THIS PREHISTORIC FISH IN OUR STATE. ALSO, THE STURGEON SEASON IS A 16-DAY SEASON, HOWEVER SINCE 1998 THE SEASON HAS NOT BEEN OPEN THE ENTIRE 16 DAYS. IN FACT, LAST YEAR IT CLOSED IN A RECORD 2 DAYS!!

IT IS SO CRITICAL THAT WE IMPLEMENT MEASURES SUCH AS INCREASING THE PRICE OF THE STURGEON LICENSES AND REMOVING THE STURGEON LICENSE FROM THE PATRON LICENSE BECAUSE THE REPRODUCTION CYCLE FOR STURGEON IS SO LONG IT WILL NOT RECOVER FROM CONTINUED OVER HARVESTING. THE FEMALE STURGEON CAN TAKE UP TO 25 YEARS TO SPAWN AND THEN ONLY HATCHES EGGS ONCE EVERY 4 OR 5 YEARS.

ENTHUSIASM AND INTEREST IN STURGEON FISHING HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY IN THE PAST 5 YEARS. THIS IS EVIDENCED BY THE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN STURGEON LICENSES ISSUED. IF YOU

COMPARE THE NUMBER OF STURGEON-FISHING LICENSE ISSUED IN 1994 AND IN 2001 YOU WILL SEE THAT THE NUMBER OF TAGS ISSUED HAS TRIPLED FROM 12,000 TO 36,000. STURGEON INTEREST AND RESOURCES ARE SO PROMINENT IN WISCONSIN THAT THERE WAS AN INTERNATIONAL STURGEON SYMPOSIUM HELD IN OSHKOSH LAST SUMMER.

BOTH OF THESE BILLS ARE NEEDED TO PROTECT OUR STURGEON POPULATION. I WANT TO CLOSE WITH THE REMINDER THAT STURGEON ARE PRIZED, PREHISTORIC, TROPHY FISH THAT TAKE MANY YEARS TO BOUNCE BACK FROM MAJOR DECREASES IN POPULATION DUE TO THEIR SLOW REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE. STURGEON ARE TROPHY FISH AND DEFINITELY WORTH PROTECTING AND WORTH MORE THAN THE CURRENT \$9.25 TAG.

I URGE YOU TO SUPPORT AND VOTE ON SB 317 AND AB 251. THANK YOU. ANY QUESTIONS?

JAN 23 2002

## SB317 Questionnaire to Conservation Congress and Other Conservation Organizations

Questionnaire was sent to all Wisconsin 359 Conservation Congress delegates. Responses were received back from 174 delegates representing 66 out of the 72 Wisconsin Counties.

Questionnaire was also submitted to several other conservation organizations around the Lake Winnebago System including: Persons attending a Public Sturgeon Meeting in Oshkosh January 14, 2002 (44), Shadows on the Wolf, Shiocton (92), Payne's Point Hook & Spear Club (27), Twin City Rod & Gun Club (21) and Winnebago Sturgeon Advisory Committee (29) - Total Respondents 213.

**Summaries and charts show response tallies for Conservation Congress Delegates compared to all responses combined from other organizations polled.**

### Poll Results:

Dick Koerner  
540 Sunrise Bay Road  
Neenah, WI 54956

1. **Increase the WI resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$39.25 (the same as a current bear kill permit)**

Conservation Congress:

Agree - 115    Disagree - 55    No Opinion - 4

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 - 7    be \$19.25 - 28    be \$29.25 - 11    be \$5.00 to \$50.00

Winnebago Respondents:

Agree - 135    Disagree - 49    No Opinion - 22

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 - 5    be \$19.25 - 19    be \$29.25 - 4    be \$45.00

2. **Increase the non-resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$199.25 (the same as a current bear kill permit)**

Conservation Congress:

Agree - 136    Disagree - 34    No Opinion - 4

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 - 0    be - \$12.00 to \$399.25

Winnebago Respondents:

Agree - 118    Disagree - 86    No Opinion - 0

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 - 0    be - more than \$199.25

**3. Remove the sturgeon spearing tag from the Conservation Patron license**

Conservation Congress:

Agree - **119**                      Disagree - **44**                      No Opinion - **11**

Winnebago Respondents:

Agree - **139**                      Disagree - **37**                      No Opinion - **9**

**4. Eliminate the provision requiring a sturgeon spearing license holder to first acquire a fishing license before acquiring a sturgeon spearing license**

Conservation Congress:

Agree - **116**                      Disagree - **43**                      No Opinion - **15**

Winnebago Respondents:

Agree - **141**                      Disagree - **25**                      No Opinion - **10**

**5. Require all revenues collected from the sale of Winnebago System sturgeon spearing licenses to be used for the management and protection of the Winnebago System lake sturgeon stock and habitat**

Conservation Congress:

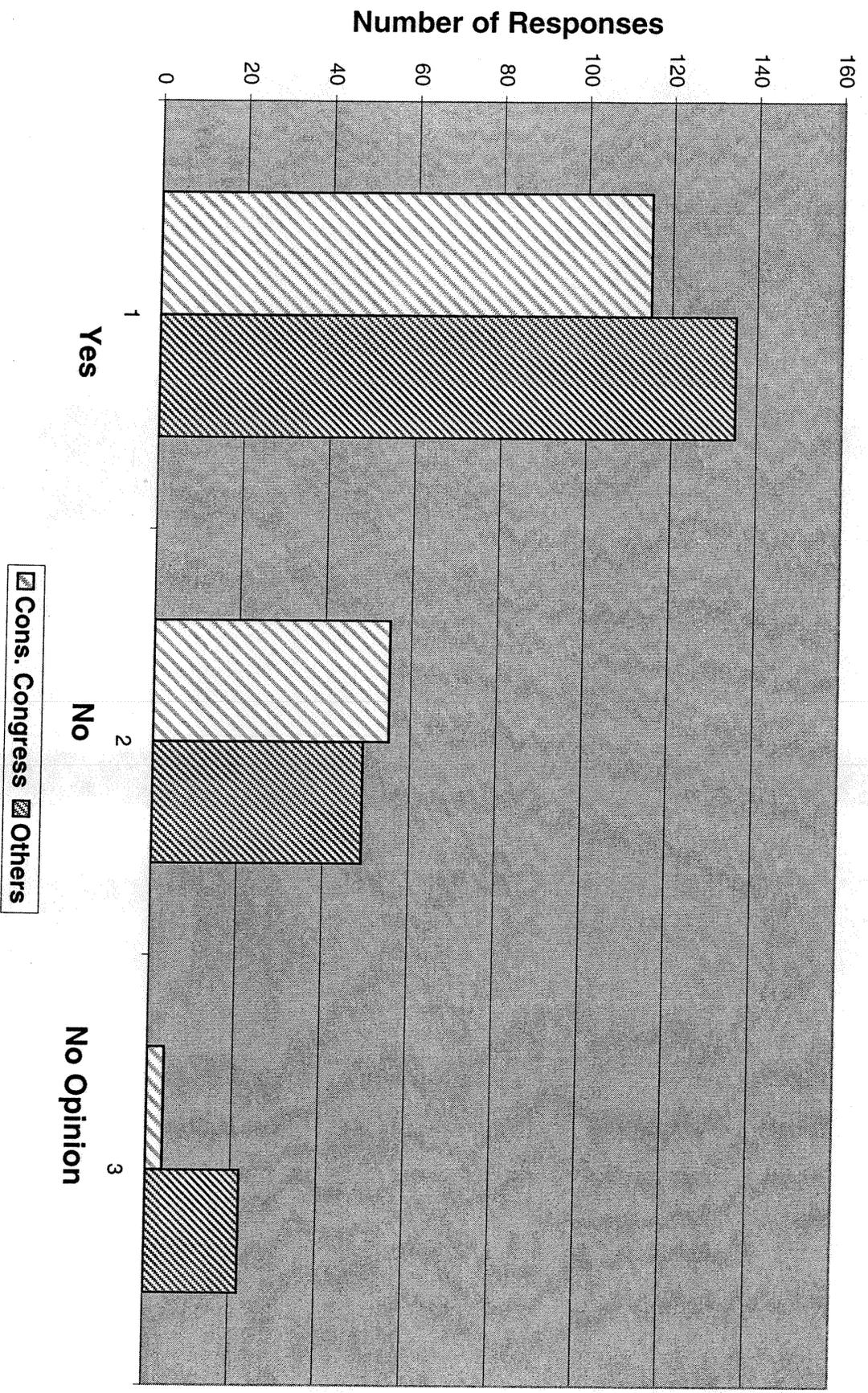
Agree - **142**                      Disagree - **21**                      No Opinion - **11**

Winnebago Respondents:

Agree - **164**                      Disagree - **11**                      No Opinion - **0**

Question 1

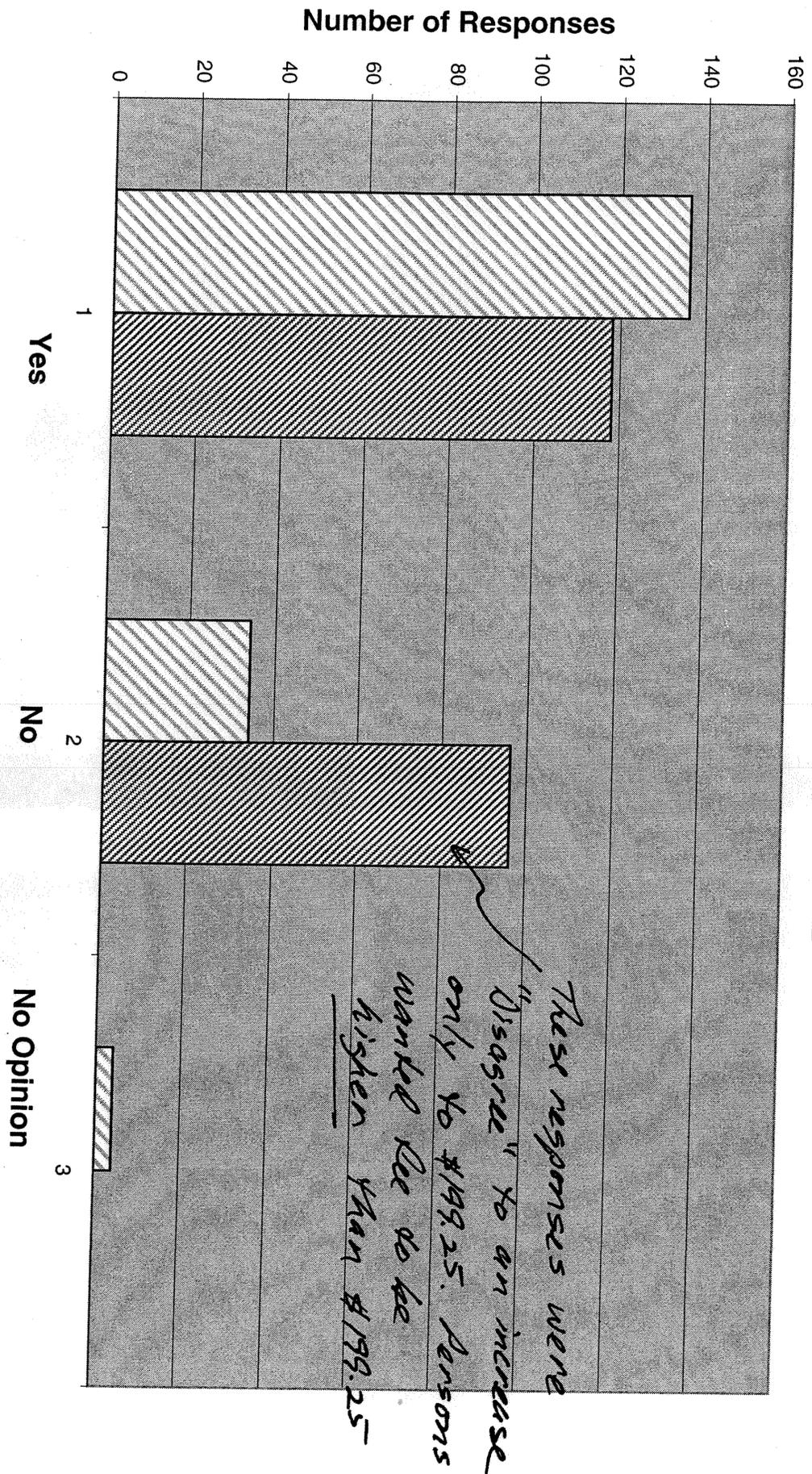
Increase Resident Spearfishing License Fee?



Question 2

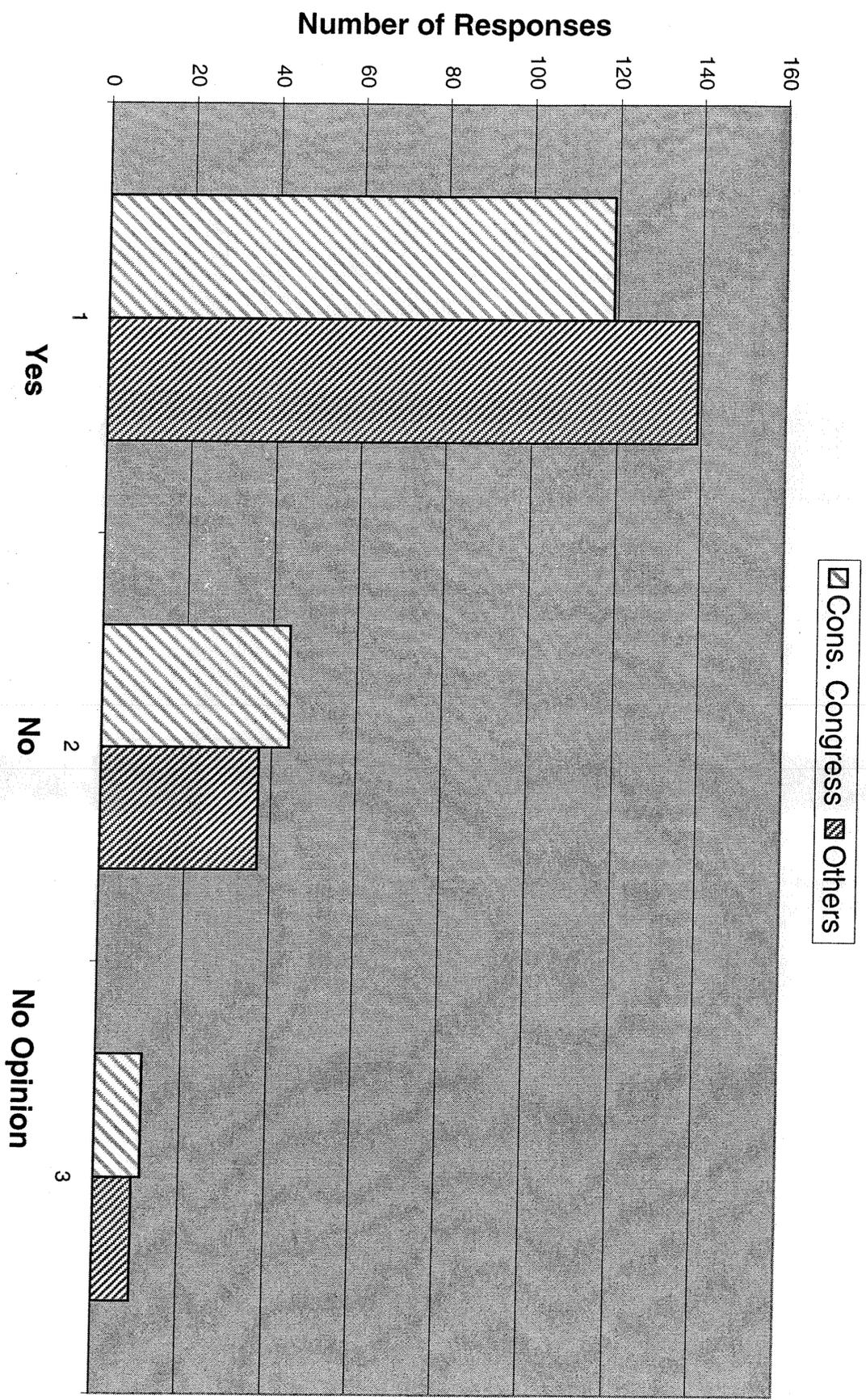
Increase Nonresident Sparing License Fee to \$199.25

Cons. Congress Others

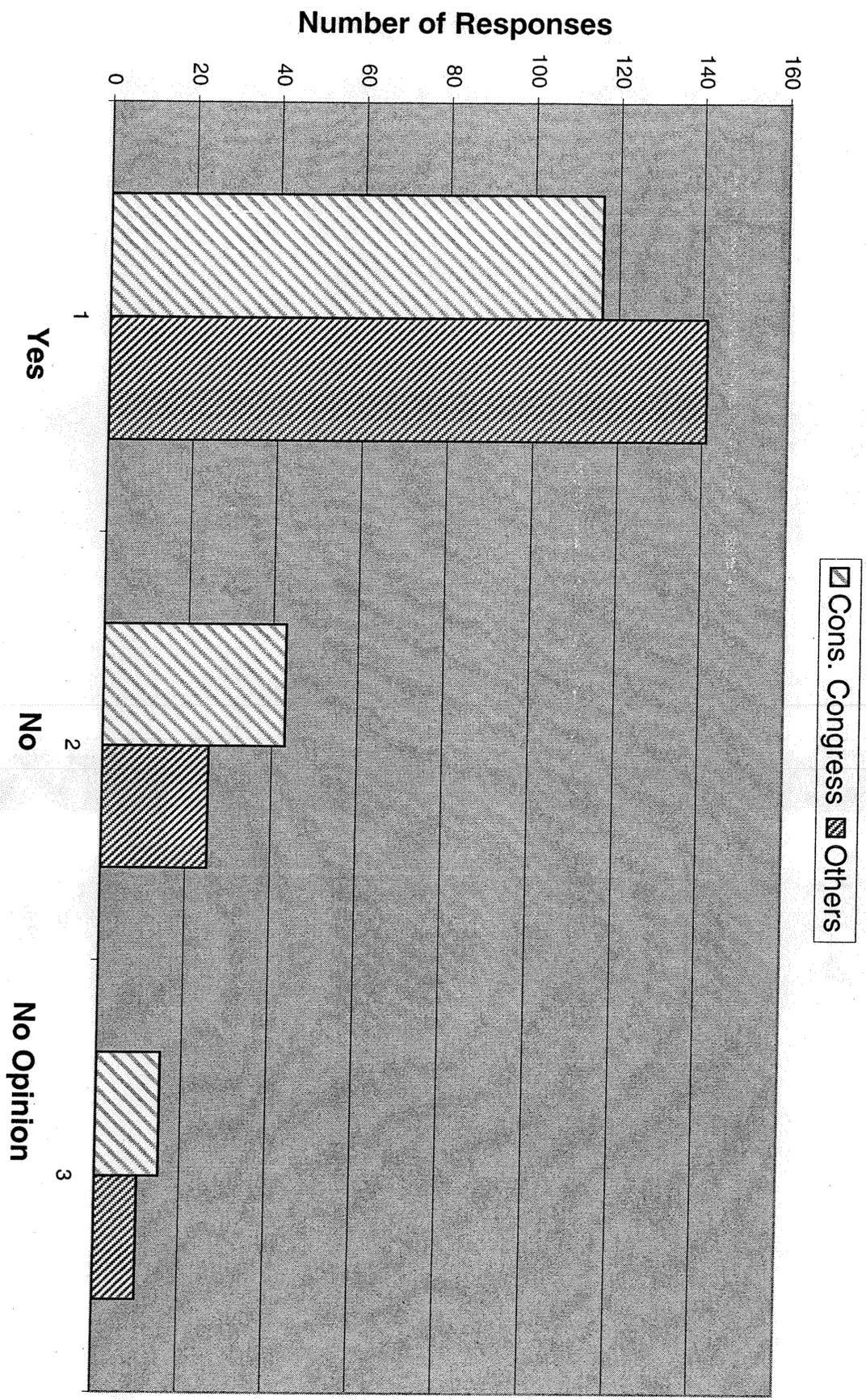


These responses were "Disagree" to an increase only to \$199.25. Persons wanted fee to be higher than \$199.25

### Remove Spearfishing Tag from CP License

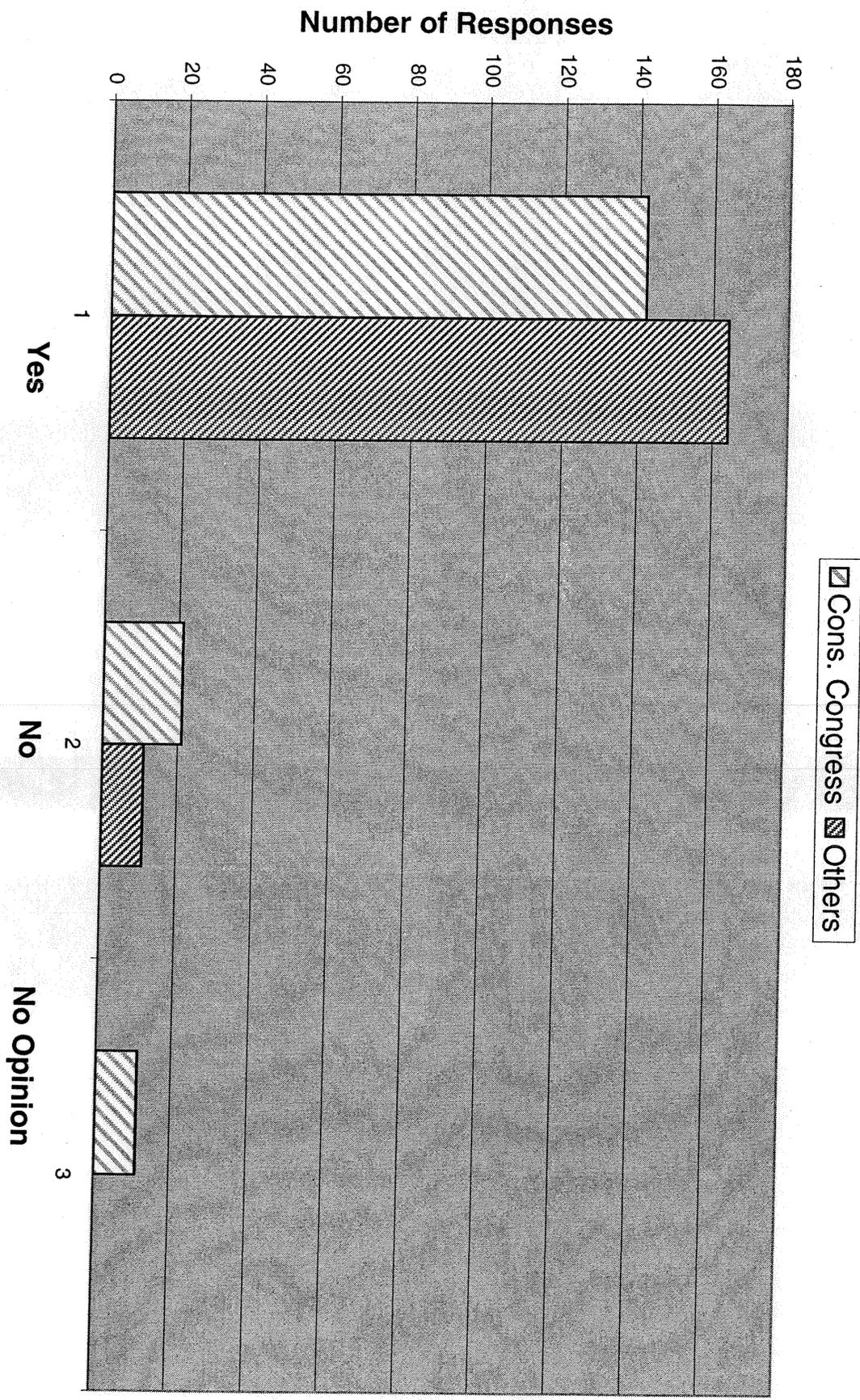


### Disassociate Spearing Tag with Fishing License



Question 5

Require Sparring Lic. \$ to be used on Winnebago Sturgeon Program



January 11, 2002

To: Wisconsin Conservation Congress Delegates

From: Dick Koerner, Chairman Winnebago County Delegation, Co-Chair District 7

Subject: Proposed Legislation for Changes in the Lake Winnebago Sturgeon Spearing License

Dear Congress Delegate,

Due to dramatic increases in the popularity of sturgeon spearing on Lake Winnebago, our sturgeon stock may once again be in trouble if we do not make some substantial changes in our sturgeon spearing laws and regulations. Sportsmen and women around Lake Winnebago are calling for some legislative changes in the sturgeon spearing license to help protect and manage the sturgeon stock. I am asking for your input and help to make these important decisions.

I, along with two other Congress delegates from Fond du Lac County, Mike Arrowood and Sherm Jacobson, serve on the Winnebago Sturgeon Advisory Committee (SAC). The SAC committee, with representatives of 29 clubs and organizations from throughout the Winnebago region, voted last spring to make the following changes in the sturgeon spearing license laws. These changes were drafted into a Senate bill, SB317, and are currently being considered by the Wisconsin legislature. While Congress delegates have participated in the development of the legislation, SAC, and the State Legislature are interested in attaining additional input from CC delegates from the rest of the state. Because of the timing of the legislative process we are not able to run these questions through the Spring Hearings. Your input is needed to help shape this decision. Enclosed with this letter is a questionnaire to all Conservation Congress Delegates asking for your input on this very important issue facing sturgeon spearkers of the Winnebago region and from throughout the state. I ask that you please answer the questions on the questionnaire and send it back to me by Friday January 18. After reading the background for each question, if you are unsure or do not understand the question, please mark "No Opinion".

**Please fill out the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed addressed envelope by Friday January 18.**

Thank you very much for your help and input.

Yours in Conservation,

*Dick*

Dick Koerner  
Chairman - Winnebago County CC  
Co-Chair - District 7 CC

## **SB 317 Background Information and Questionnaire**

### **Proposed changes to Lake Winnebago Sturgeon Spearing License**

Senate bill SB317, forwarded by Senator Carol Roessler of Oshkosh, grew out of concern expressed and from ideas developed by the Winnebago Citizens Sturgeon Advisory Committee and the general spearing public around the Winnebago System.

We have experienced some very high sturgeon spearing harvests from the Winnebago Lakes over the last decade, and as such we have made numerous changes to our spearing regulations to help control the harvest including implementation of a harvest cap and a season early closure mechanism when the cap is reached. While we were able to bring the harvest rate down close to a safe level for a few years, unfortunately, greater than anticipated increases in spearing effort have once again forced us to look to other mechanisms to control the harvest. Since 1994 the number of spearing tags has tripled from 12,143 in 1994 to over 36,159 in 2001. The ultimate controlling mechanism would be to implement a harvest lottery and only issue a limited number of harvest tags similar to the system the DNR uses with turkey or bear, but the spearers around the Lake Winnebago System, while they understand the need to keep the harvest at a safe level, are, at least at this time, adamantly opposed to a lottery.

The Winnebago Sturgeon Advisory Committee (SAC), a 29 member alliance of representatives from sportsmen and conservation organizations from around the Lake Winnebago region, work with the local DNR Sturgeon Biologist, Ron Bruch, to review Winnebago System sturgeon data, identify management issues and develop recommendations for new rules, laws or management actions. The persons that serve on this committee are selected or elected by their respective organizations to serve and represent their organization's members. The SAC has been functioning since 1992. The SAC committee identified at its March 2001 meeting that spearing pressure was excessive and in order to keep the sturgeon harvest in check that the number of tags issued would have to be reduced. After thorough discussion, the group recommended the changes which are now embodied in SB317. The SAC voted nearly unanimously to endorse these changes and to initiate an effort to move them through the legislative process. Over this past summer and fall SAC members worked with Senator Roessler to develop the language for a draft bill.

In mid October 2001, Ron Bruch (DNR) conducted two public meetings at Taycheedah (Fond du Lac) and Oshkosh to discuss with the general public and SAC members in a public forum, the proposals embodied in SB317 as well as to discuss an emergency administrative rule change the DNR was considering to help control the sturgeon harvest. In both meetings the public expressed support for SB317 and a DNR emergency rule proposal calling for reducing the spearing day for the 2002 season (this emergency rule was passed by the Natural Resources Board at their December 2001 meeting and will be in place for the 2002 spearing season). The support for the various proposals amongst the 70 people in attendance at the meetings, while not completely unanimous, was substantial and a solid majority of persons present. I believe that people fully realize that if we can not enact SB317 that the only other option we have left is a lottery for the spear fishery on Lake Winnebago. With the passage of SB317 spearers are hopeful that we can avoid going to a lottery on Lake Winnebago

**Questions with regards to the specific points of SB317:**

**License fee increase**

The SAC has long wanted an increase in the fee charged for a Winnebago sturgeon spearing license. This license was one of the only licenses not increased in the last DNR requested increase (despite requests for an increase from spearers) and has been \$10.00 since 1992 - \$9.25 for the license and \$.75 for the vendor fee. Most serious spearers feel that an increase will help lower the number of tags issued. The recommended increases from the current \$10 for both residents and non-residents to \$39.25 and 199.25 respectfully were derived from a precedent already set with the WI bear kill license which is also \$39.25 and \$199.25. The SAC felt that harvesting a sturgeon was at least as valuable as killing a bear. They also felt strongly that non-residents should be required to pay more to participate in such a unique and limited fishery - similar to how WI residents must pay more to hunt elk or whatever in western states.

- 1. Increase the WI resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$39.25 (the same as a current bear kill permit)**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_\_\_

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 \_\_\_\_\_ be \$19.25 \_\_\_\_\_ be \$29.25 \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Increase the non-resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$199.25 (the same as a current bear kill permit)**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_\_\_

If you checked "Disagree" above should License fee:  
remain \$9.25 \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_

**Removing the sturgeon tag from the conservation patron license**

The SAC members have also for many years wanted to tackle this issue, but were very sensitive to the DNR's strong resistance to changes to the conservation patron license benefits. SAC members feel though the time has come that we can no longer afford to provide a "free" tag with every cp license and that the sturgeon spear fishery is so unique and limited that it deserves to be managed under a separate special license. Another very important concern expressed by the SAC members was the large number of cp sturgeon spearing tags in circulation each winter (30,052 cp tags issued in 2001 as opposed to 6,107 regular spearing licenses sold) contributes significantly to illegal group spearing and thereby to the overharvest. We estimate that a majority of the serious spearers currently purchase a regular spearing license, although the number of these spearers purchasing cp licenses has been growing over the last several years. Still, it is safe to say that the vast majority (probably more than 25,000) of the cp sturgeon spearing tags issued go to persons that don't spear. Most of these tags are readily available to less than honest spearers who "use their buddy's tag" to register fish so they can continue spearing. In the current license year, out of 81,000 cp licenses sold, over 30,000 sturgeon spearing tags have already been issued.

- 3. Remove the sturgeon spearing tag from the Conservation Patron license**

Agree \_\_\_\_\_ Disagree \_\_\_\_\_ No Opinion \_\_\_\_\_

**Removing the connection between a fishing license and a sturgeon spearing license**

Prior to 1960 sturgeon spearing harvest tags were issued to spearkers as a part of their fishing license for an additional 5 cents. Beginning in 1960 spearkers were required to purchase a separate spearing license in addition to purchasing their fishing license. At this point this required connection is no longer needed and obsolete as spearkers were prohibited from fishing in a spearing shanty beginning in 1993.

4. **Eliminate the provision requiring a sturgeon spearing license holder to first acquire a fishing license before acquiring a sturgeon spearing license**

Agree\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_ No Opinion\_\_\_\_

**Requiring all sturgeon spearing license funds to be used for the Winnebago sturgeon management program.**

Very popular provision of SB317. Currently the DNR allocates \$30,000 for all sturgeon management, population assessment, harvest assessment, habitat development and research on the Winnebago system. Sturgeon for Tomorrow has worked hard to help raise additional funds, but additional monies are needed and this provision would guarantee the unique Winnebago sturgeon program would be adequately funded and the spearkers would know their money is going directly into benefiting their sturgeon fishery.

5. **Require all revenues collected from the sale of Winnebago System sturgeon spearing licenses to be used for the management and protection of the Winnebago System lake sturgeon stock and habitat**

Agree\_\_\_\_ Disagree\_\_\_\_ No Opinion\_\_\_\_

**Please fill out this questionnaire and return to Dick Koerner in the enclosed addressed envelope by Friday January 18, 2002**

**THANK YOU**

**Dick Koerner  
540 Sunrise Bay Rd.  
Neenah, WI 54956  
Phone: 920-722-0433  
e-mail: dk2635@aol.com**

**COMMENTS ON THE SURVEY FROM SENATE BILL 317  
(Conservation Congress Comments)**

**Question 1** Increase the Wisconsin resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$39.25 (the same as the current bear kill permit).

Comments:

Rich Olsen from Sawyer County disagreed on all five questions and said we are circumventing our WCC process with no DNR Board input and no more advisory.

Pepin County-How about adopting the same approach for spearing as for bear?

Door County-A reasonable increase of \$5 or \$6.

Marquette County-Have consistent wording; question 1 refers to license and question 2 refers to tag.

Price County-If no fishing license is needed, it is okay to go to \$29.25.

Richland County-DNR should set it so that the family of four can afford to go together and get a group permit.

Richland County-Don't price sturgeon spearing out of a Wisconsin family, it is not just for the rich.

Waupaca County-You can't bear hunt every year because of the lottery.

Fond du Lac County-\$39.25 is excessive-\$19.25 is excessive-got to \$15.00.

Waushara County-We must stop the rise in license fees as you limit some of us from the sport. Do not make this a sport for the rich.

Waushara County-To say bear hunting is equal to spearing is way off in putting hunters against spearers.

Page Two

**Question 2** Increase the non-resident sturgeon spearing license from \$9.25 to \$199.25 the same as a current bear kill permit.

Wood County-Has a son in Missouri and can't afford a high price nonresident license.

Buffalo County-Don't get money hungry.

Door County-A reasonable increase but not from \$10 to \$200.

? County-We do not allow nonresidents to trap; fur is valuable and so is sturgeon. Ban out-of-state spearing-at best raise the price.

Walworth County-If we get the fees too high we shut out the nonresident.

Winnebago County-Same as their state fee is for nonresidence. If there is no season in their state for nonresidence, there should be none in ours.

Page 3

**Question 3** Remove the sturgeon spearing tag from the Wisconsin patron license.

? County-Control the tagging just like deer archery. Why have CP license if we are going to remove items from it.

Forest County-Have the CP license holder apply before receiving a sturgeon tag.

Iowa County-Charge a fee for an application like a bear license.

Jefferson County-You must include the application as part of the CP license. If drawn, they can buy a tag-do not remove from CP license.

Outagamie County-Reduce the price of a CP license by \$10 if taken off.

Price County-This question should have been asked before question 1.

Racine County-Go to a lottery-the fish belongs to all Wisconsin residents, no just locals.

Richland County-This is a regulation and enforcement problem, change the law so if you don't have a kill tag, you can't be there.

Waukesha County-It should be a lottery like bear or turkey. The CP tag would get you in the lottery at no extra fee and you would have the same chance at drawing a tag as anyone.

Waupaca County-Only if the cost of the CP license is reduced by that much.

Wood County-It should be a separate license. Do away with the CP, it is the same as a sportsman's license..

Eau Claire County- Should go to a lottery.

Oneida County-We keep pecking away at the patron license. Keep it even if the price has to go up.

Buffalo County-Why have a CP license if you take away all the time.

Kewaunee County-I would favor a lottery at some time in the near future if application is part of the CP license.

Vernon County-A lottery is needed. It is the only fair way to do this. These proposals smack of protectionism for locals only. Comment 2-The best solution is a lottery system.

Waushara County-I hate to see it taken off the CP license but at the new cost, it should be a choice like the bear license. The CP license should drop by \$10.00.

Page 4

**Question 3 (cont)**

Juneau County-Why not go to a lottery system like the bear.

Washburn County-No, they are cutting everything off the patron license now.

Waushara County-The way to go would be the lottery system with the CP license holder given an application and a \$3.00 fee to all others for an application for the drawing.

Page Five

**Question 4** Eliminate the provision requiring a sturgeon spearing license holder to first acquire a fishing license before acquiring a sturgeon spearing license.

Iowa County-If you need funds for the program this would be a source. It is okay as long as we are not losing any funds in the fishing license for sturgeon management.

Outagamie County-I disagree. The trout needs a license plus a stamp.

LaCrosse County-This is taking fish from public waters. The method having nothing to do with the license fees.

Waushara County-This rule is making this a big game species. It should be separate and I agree.

Douglas County-Allocate 50% of the money to the management program.

Shawano County-Split the funds to the area of Winnebago, Poygan, etc. to alleviate problems in this crucial area.

Trempealeau County-The revenue from all sturgeon license to be used for all sturgeon management in the state.

Waushara County-Monies for management, etc. would come from the \$1.00 per each CP license holder and \$1.00 per application. The DNR does this with the trappers for trapper education. All license monies could go to management. CP license number plus application number equals management dollars \$100,000 or more.

Waushara County-A general comment---If SB317 is passed, it would be hard to change later if it did not work. Unless you put in say a 5 year sunset on it.

**Question 5** Require all revenues collected from the sale of Winnebago system sturgeon spearing licenses to be used for the management and protection of the Winnebago system lake sturgeon stock and habitat.

? County-Allocate 50% of sturgeon license dollars to sturgeon and the remaining 50% to fish and wildlife.

Marquette County-I agree less the cost of set up charges in the ALIS system.

Richland County-All sturgeon money should go to sturgeon management statewide.

Taylor County-If you do this with sturgeon, you have to do this with deer, fish, bear, ducks and small game.

LaCrosse County-Because sturgeon are populated in other waters throughout the state, revenue collected should be available to all sturgeon programs.

Oneida County-It should go to all sturgeon; mostly to the Winnebago system but some should go to sturgeon in other parts of the state.