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(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ...  
PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2009-10

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on ... Transportation, Tourism,  
Forestry, and Natural Resources (SC-TTFNR)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)  
(**ab** = Assembly Bill)                      (**ar** = Assembly Resolution)                      (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)  
(**sb** = Senate Bill)                              (**sr** = Senate Resolution)                              (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**

# WAUSAU DAILY HERALD

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2009

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## Make DNR secretary an independent position

**EDITOR:** Jim Lee's Sept. 28 Wausau Daily Herald article was spot on in proclaiming "Doyle key to DNR secretary position." A onetime supporter, Doyle now threatens to veto the legislation that would take the secretary position by making it an independent appointment.

The article doesn't mention the role that state Sen. Russ Decker will play in the independent DNR secretary bill. As majority leader, Sen. Decker will determine whether the bill gets scheduled for a vote.

I sincerely believe that Decker's constituents want a qualified conservation professional as the DNR secretary — not a political appointee. The deer herd and bear harvest are impacted by this position.

Please call the legislative hotline 608-267-9528 and remind Decker he has our support on the independent DNR secretary bill. Tell him that it's our voice, not the governor's, that we want him to represent as our senator.

**Maynard Breunig**  
Wausau

## LETTER OF THE WEEK

**Name:** Maynard Breunig

**Age:** 62

**Hometown:**  
Rural Marathon County near the Marathon County/Lincoln County line

**Occupation:**  
Retired, worked for GTE phone company



**What inspired him to write:**

An independent appointment for Department of Natural Resources secretary would be appointed by the DNR Board instead of the governor, so it would be coming from a science background instead of a political background. Who would you rather have in there, a politician or a (scientist)?

What's irritating is that when Gov. Doyle was campaigning, he was saying he was going to change this. When it came up, he had a change of heart.

Is there a risk of a backlash? I've kind of been expecting a backlash for a long time and it never seems to happen. Gov. Doyle, he's not going to run again, so it doesn't matter to him. As far as Sen. Decker, if it just doesn't come up for a vote, he doesn't look that bad. He can slide that under the table. His argument can be, well, we just didn't have time for it. It's safe for him as a politician, but it's undemocratic for his constituents.

If it is brought up, it will pass — it's brought for a vote in the Senate. There are so many people who cosponsored this bill.

## **Letter to the Editor Calling for Senators Vinehout and Kreitlow to Champion Independent DNR Secretary Through Senate**

Blogged in Integrity / DNR Secretary, Letter to the Editor, Uncategorized by tom Tuesday October 13, 2009

# **LEADER-TELEGRAM**

## **Get Politics Out of DNR**

I was very pleased to see both Reps. Jeff Smith and Kristen Dexter were among the bipartisan majority who voted to take politics out of the appointment of the state Department of Natural Resources secretary. The independent DNR secretary bill will provide a buffer between the politics of special interests and the scientific decision-making that hunters, anglers and environmentalists expect in the management of natural resources. Just as important, it will assure our environmental and natural resource policies remain consistent even as political trends shift back and forth.

For years, Wisconsin was an environmental leader as well as one of the finest hunting and fishing destinations in the world. Sadly, we no longer rank as an environmental leader, and our hunting and fishing resources are threatened. We need consistent and effective leadership from the DNR to recapture our historic and rightful place. Ever-changing politics makes that impossible. Strong, consistent DNR leadership coupled with science-driven analyses and policies can make it a reality. This bill is exactly what we need.

Now it moves on to the Senate, where we must have the support of Sens. Pat Kreitlow and Kathleen Vinehout. Vinehout has signed on as a co-sponsor of the bill. When I visited his office this spring, Kreitlow indicated he would be supporting this bill. I really hope Vinehout and Kreitlow not only support the bill but lead the charge to get it to the governor's desk!

Please call the legislative hotline at 1-800-362-9472 and ask your state senator to get this law passed.

TONY SCHUSTER

Chippewa Falls

<http://www.conservationvoters.org/blog/>

**Milwaukee Senators Must Act to Restore Conservation Integrity to the DNR**  
Blogged in Integrity / DNR Secretary, Letter to the Editor, Media by heather Sunday October 18, 2009



DNR: A Wise Change

I was delighted to see a lot of Milwaukee-area state Assembly representatives – including mine, Jon Richards – among the bipartisan majority who voted to restore conservation integrity to the Department of Natural Resources by returning to a board-appointed secretary.

An independent DNR secretary will provide a buffer between the politics of special interests and the scientific decision-making that hunters, anglers and environmentalists expect. It will also assure that our environmental and natural resource policies remain consistent as political trends shift back and forth.

Strong, consistent DNR leadership coupled with science-driven analyses and policies can ensure that Wisconsin's natural environment will be maintained for future generations. This bill is exactly what we need.

Now it moves on to the Senate, where we must have the support of Sens. Spencer Coggs D-Milwaukee, Lena Taylor D-Milwaukee and Jeffrey Plale D-South Milwaukee. Coggs and Taylor have signed on as co-sponsors of the bill, and Plale has co-sponsored it in the past. I hope Coggs, Taylor and Plale not only support the bill but lead the charge to get it to the governor's desk.

Please call the legislative hotline at 800 362-9472 to have your voice heard.

Amy Hufford, Milwaukee

<http://www.conservationvoters.org/blog/?p=3746>

# DUNN COUNTY NEWS

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**WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

Last modified: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 7:08 AM CDT

## **Murtha's vote earns praise from outdoorsfolk**

Recently, legislation restoring the appointment authority of the DNR [Dept. of Natural Resources] Secretary back to the Natural Resources Board was voted on in the State Assembly. This is a bill of major interest to Wisconsin sportsmen and women, who have been asking for its passage for 14 years.

Rep. John Murtha provided one of the key votes for the bill on the floor of the Assembly.

A special thanks from Wisconsin's hunters, anglers and trappers goes to Rep. Murtha for strongly supporting their interests.

George Meyer, executive director

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Poynette

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<http://www.dunnconnect.com/articles/2009/09/30/letters/doc4ac22e3beefc4632021115.prt>

## **Michael Derpinghaus: Huebsch switched sides on DNR issue**

By Michael Derpinghaus / Holmen, Wednesday, September 2, 2009

State Rep. Mike Huebsch co-sponsored a bill regarding an independent Department of Natural Resources secretary but now is leaning toward a less transparent, bureaucratic, political process of decision-making in matters relating to the natural resources decision making process.

Last session, Huebsch supported restoring the appointment of the secretary to the citizens on the Natural Resources Board but then turned tail and gave that power back to the one man, the lobbyist-influenced governor. One man who wields that kind of power cannot be in the best interests of either the citizens of this state or the environment. One man is too easily influenced by whispers in his ear and promises of support on other more mundane yet important to his own interest type of issues.

We need to let the people who are truly concerned with the environment and have the best interests of our natural resources be making these decisions, not making it more political and splitting the department up and allowing more political influences play with our resources.

I urge everyone who believes in transparency and integrity to call Huebsch (1-888-534-0094) and demand that he support an independent DNR secretary as he originally stated and not cave in to the political forces that moved him to cloud this issue and change his mind.

[http://www.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/article\\_3a3b2796-974b-11de-a70d-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/article_3a3b2796-974b-11de-a70d-001cc4c03286.html)

DNR

### A wise change

I was delighted to see a lot of Milwaukee-area state Assembly representatives — including mine, Jon Richards — among the bipartisan majority who voted to restore conservation integrity to the Department of Natural Resources by returning to a board-appointed secretary.

An independent DNR secretary will provide a

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buffer between the politics of special interests and the scientific decision-making that hunters, anglers and environmentalists expect. It will also assure that our environmental and natural resource policies remain consistent as political trends shift back and forth.

Strong, consistent DNR leadership coupled with science-driven analyses and policies can ensure that Wisconsin's natural environment will be maintained for future generations. This bill is exactly what we need.

Now it moves on to the Senate, where we must have the support of Sens. Spencer Coggs (D-Milwaukee), Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Jeffrey Plale (D-South Milwaukee). Coggs and Taylor have signed on as co-sponsors of the bill, and Plale has co-sponsored it in the past. I hope Coggs, Taylor and Plale not only support the bill but lead the charge to get it to the governor's desk.

Please call the legislative hotline at (800) 362-9472 to have your voice heard.

**Amy Hufford**  
Milwaukee

**Monroe County Democrat**

(USPS 359-300)

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William V. Gleiss, Editor and Publisher

**Letters To The Editor*****Conservation Alert***

Dear Editor:

On Tuesday, July 28, the Assembly Natural Resources Committee will hold a public hearing on Assembly Bill 138 relating to the appointment and term of service of the secretary of natural resources and vacancies on the Natural Resources Board. This bill will restore the appointment of the natural resources secretary to the Natural Resources Board. Since 1995, the secretary has been appointed by the governor and for the last 14 years the collective conservation community has been working to restore the appointment of the secretary to the Natural Resources Board as it had been done since the formation of the original Conservation Commission in 1927. The issue revolves around independence and objectivity in the management of the natural resources of the state.

The original Conservation Commission was created through the efforts of the Izaak Walton League and Aldo Leopold to promote a more effective and less political state conservation administration. The Wisconsin Conservation Act of 1927 provided for a conservation department headed by a director responsible to six commissioners appointed by the governor for staggered six-year terms. This organization worked for 67 years for the public interest, essentially insulated from political influence.

The belief then and, the belief today is that the states numerous natural resources are too important to be influenced by political whim or "well healed" special interests seeking profits from the use, or abuse, of the state's natural resources at the expense of the public interest in these resources. While the early Conservation Commission and its successor Natural Resources Board have not been without controversy from time to time, the organizational structure and process are democratic and objective if it is removed from the direct political opinion of the time. This would benefit the public interest of all Wisconsin citizens.

Please contact your state assembly person supporting this important legislation, particularly representatives Nerison, Huebsch and Danou who are members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. Our natural resources cannot speak for themselves; it is our responsibility to speak on their behalf to maintain their quality and quantity.

**Ned Gatzke**  
Sparta



## **John Wetzel: Huebsch should support hunters, anglers**

By John Wetzel / Holmen | Posted: Monday, August 24, 2009 12:15 am |It doesn't take a boat trip on the river or hiking Grandad Bluff to know that our area's natural resources are truly something special. As unique as this region is, so too are the sheer number of men and women who hunt, fish and simply enjoy western Wisconsin's outdoor opportunities. It is these conservation-minded people who are concerned about protecting and preserving Wisconsin's natural resources.

Another unique feature of Wisconsin is our Conservation Congress system, which allows outdoorsmen and women to take part in formulating Department of Natural Resources policy through meetings held every spring. It was at this year's meeting that I introduced a resolution to restore the appointment authority of the DNR Secretary to the Natural Resources Board, a vote that passed with over 95 percent of the vote.

Wisconsin's Legislature has debated this issue nearly every year since 1995. I was happy to see Rep. Mike Huebsch sign on as a co-sponsor of the bill last session. So far this session, his support hasn't been as clear. However, Huebsch and the other members of the Assembly and Senate will have an opportunity to prove that they support removing politics from natural resource decision-making when they cast their votes next month on the DNR secretary bill.

The public has spoken. I hope that Huebsch stands up for conservation integrity when the time comes to vote in support of both the current and future generations.

[http://www.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/article\\_896e8d18-8ecb-11de-a1ea-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/article_896e8d18-8ecb-11de-a1ea-001cc4c03286.html)



## Doyle breaking faith, line on DNR position

GREEN BAY — For years, Gov. Jim Doyle has supported good government by backing the return of an independent state DNR Secretary who would be appointed by the Natural Resources Board rather than as a political appointee of the governor.

I voted for him because of his campaign promises that he would see to it that the secretary would no longer be appointed by the governor. Recent media coverage shows that Gov. Doyle is now rethinking his position.

Perhaps, now that the Legislature has a good chance of passing a bill, he's wavering on his word because he doesn't want to lose power. By not signing a bill that would protect Wisconsin's natural resources, Gov. Doyle would be going against the wishes of a majority of Wisconsinites who want to see our natural resources in the hands of good decision-making, not politics.

This is why I'm attending Conservation Lobby Day on Feb. 25 in Madison. I want to use my voice to urge the governor to rethink his new position on the secretary.

If you want to help restore Wisconsin's conservation integrity, then sign up to join me at [www.conservationvoters\\_line.org](http://www.conservationvoters_line.org).

Jack Koivisto

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/article/20090123/GPG0603/901230550/1271>

**Richard Proise Letter Responding to Wisconsin State Journal**  
Blogged in Integrity / DNR Secretary, Letter to the Editor, Uncategorized by tom Friday October 2, 2009

# Wisconsin State Journal

## **DNR chief choice best made by board**

Thursday's editorial, "Keep DNR chief in gov's Cabinet," concludes that the governor should appoint the DNR secretary because the governor is ultimately responsible to the voters. I agree that DNR should first and foremost serve the general public. For that reason, however, appointment authority should be returned to the Natural Resources Board. Your editorial fails to recognize two important facts. First, the governor was elected in part for his early statements that the board should have that authority. Once elected, he conveniently changed his mind. Second, at both the Assembly and Senate hearings, public sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of the board rather than the governor appointing the secretary. The few special interest groups that have spoken in opposition to the board having such authority have something to lose if the governor loses his appointment authority. Perhaps they contributed to the governor's campaign fund and receive special privileges in return. I think the governor's closed door meetings with special interest groups determine many DNR positions.

<http://www.conservationvoters.org/blog/?p=3664>

# LaCrosseTribune.com

La Crosse, Wisconsin

Published - Saturday, July 25, 2009

## YOUR VIEWS

### Back a board-appointed resources chief

BY NED GATZKE

Sparta

Conservation alert! Area conservationists should know that the Assembly Natural Resources Committee will hold a hearing Tuesday on Assembly Bill 138, which would restore the appointment of the secretary of natural resources to the Natural Resources Board rather than a political appointment of the governor.

Since the creation of the original Conservation Commission in 1927, the secretary has been appointed by the commission, now the Natural Resources Board, whose members are appointed by the governor to staggered terms. This authority was removed from the board in 1995 by legislative action. Since then the collective conservation community has been working to restore the appointment authority to the independent Natural Resources Board because we believe that management of our natural resources requires independence and objectivity that benefit the public interest. This objective cannot be accomplished effectively when part of the equation is subject to the political influence of the time rather than objective analysis.

Contact your assembly representative and express your sup-

port for this legislation, especially Reps. Lee Nerison, Mike Huebsch and Chris Danou, who are members of the Natural Resources Committee.

# Wisconsin State Journal

## Follow the money on DNR chief selection

Thomas Thoresen, Fitchburg retired deputy chief conservation warden | Posted: Tuesday, September 29, 2009 5:40 pm | [No Comments Posted](#)

Some of the powerful special interests, lobbyists and politicians want a political patronage system for leadership of our natural resources agency. They hide behind a smokescreen of "accountability" because it sounds good to the naive.

Five former DNR secretaries, whose jobs do not depend on what information they provide to the press, say otherwise. So did hundreds of conservation organizations, unions representing science professionals and those charged to protect the public and our natural resources.

Follow the money. The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign recently reported that Gov. Jim Doyle received over \$4 million in campaign donations from the opponents of a Natural Resources Board-appointed DNR Secretary between 2003 and 2008. Doyle flip-flopped this spring against his prior election promises to the public.

Campaign finance records show Rep. Mike Huebsch, R-West Salem, a leading opponent, received over \$172,000 in donations from special interests opposed to the legislation over the same period. Last session, then-Speaker Huebsch, against the wishes of many constituents, didn't even allow elected representatives to vote on the issue.

Posted in [Mailbag](#) on *Tuesday, September 29, 2009 5:40 pm* [Dnr Secretary](#), [Natural Resources Board](#), [Gov. Jim Doyle](#), [Rep. Mike Huebsch](#)

[http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article\\_0b7e9a68-ad4a-11de-ad1b-001cc4c03286.html](http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article_0b7e9a68-ad4a-11de-ad1b-001cc4c03286.html)

**wausaudailyherald.com**



EDITOR: If clean air, pristine waters, and healthy fish and game populations are important to you, then there is legislation in Madison that you need to be aware of.

If you have been following the legislative initiative to reinstate the power to appoint the DNR secretary to the Natural Resource Board, you know that the Assembly overwhelmingly passed this bill. They understand that our natural resources are too important to be directed by political appointees that in many cases have no background in natural resources.

Now it's the state Senate's turn to address the bill. The groups that are opposed to this change feel that keeping this bill off the senate floor is a very good way to defeat it. Sen. Russ Decker is the key person to getting this bill on the Senate floor for debate and a vote. Sen. Decker needs to hear from us, the people that he represents, that this bill should be brought to the floor of the Senate and that he should support this change.

Sen. Decker can be reached at 1-877-496-0472 or [Sen.Decker@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Decker@legis.wisconsin.gov). Please take a minute to make the call or send an e-mail.

Mike Riggle

Taylor County Conservation Congress

Medford

<http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/article/20091026/WDH06/910260576/1638/LETTER--Call--write-Decker-on-DNR-bill>

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**TORNADOES KILL 8 PEOPLE  
TUESDAY IN OKLAHOMA. A3.**

# THE CHIPPewa HERALD



**CARDINALS GET  
SHUTOUT IN LAST  
REGULAR SEASON  
HOCKEY GAME. B**

**CHI-HI BOYS' 4-  
GAME WIN STREA  
SNAPPED BY  
ALTOONA. B1.**

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## YOUR VIEWS

### Keep politics out of natural resources

I love to walk the Old Abe Bike Trail Bridge crossing the Chippewa River south of Highway O on clear evenings. The sunset is beautiful, but is breathtaking reflected in the river. Yet there are signs at the boat landing for invasive plants growing in Lake Wissota.

I would guess almost everyone has a favorite outdoor spot as well. These special and magical landscapes deserve to be managed mindful of their timelessness; here before us and here long after us — our only job is to respect these wonderful fishing, hunting, hiking, and viewing spots, and keep them pristine.

To be responsible stewards of Wisconsin's natural resources, it makes sense to practice consistent, science-based decision-making, led by the Department of Natural Resources. Good conservation policy in our state should start at the top, with an independent, rather than politically appointed, DNR secretary.

If you love being the outdoors, then you understand that our natural resources ought to be beyond the whim of politics. State senators, representatives and governors all come and go. The havoc wreaked on natural resources by changes in policy could certainly be too

much to bear.

On Feb. 25, join conservation-minded citizens in Madison for Conservation Lobby Day to let our legislature know that we need to take politics out of managing Wisconsin's natural resources. If unable to attend, contact your senator and representative to let them know your views.

**Renee Fontaine-Ebel**  
Chippewa Falls

### Isaacson, Ferg would make good judges

As a lawyer who regularly uses the Chippewa County courts, I strongly recommend you vote for Jim Isaacson or Bob Ferg as our next judge.

Each is an experienced court commissioner repeatedly recommended by county judges and approved by Judge Ben Proctor, chief justice of the Tenth Judicial District. Each is a fair-minded fellow with respect of prosecutors, deputies, lawyers, court people and clients. And each is a person of honesty, humility and thoughtfulness.

If you don't know them, call them and introduce yourself. Or talk to friends, neighbors or others who work at the courthouse.

Please vote in the primary on Feb. 17 and the final election April 7. Your vote counts.

**Charles G. Norseng**  
Attorney and court commissioner  
Chippewa Falls

# Wisconsin State Journal **DNR**

## mission served by board, not gov

Edward J. Frank, Madison | Posted: Wednesday, September 30, 2009 5:45 pm | [\(2\) Comments](#)

Accountability and responsibility to voters is the State Journal editorial board's primary reason for supporting the status quo regarding DNR secretary appointment. Keeping the DNR secretary in the governor's Cabinet is not the first and foremost way to serve the general public.

Who is the governor most accountable to? The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign reported that Gov. Jim Doyle received \$4.14 million in campaign contributions from 2003 to 2008 from powerful special interest groups, including those representing construction, real estate, manufacturers and commerce, that oppose legislation to end his appointment authority. He only received \$17,175 from supporters of the legislation.

A DNR board-appointed secretary would not remove politics from DNR programs, but it would provide a buffer between the DNR secretary and Wisconsin's single most powerful politician.

To best serve the public, the DNR needs continuity of leadership and reliance on science-based, long-term solutions to natural resource and environmental problems.

Any seven-member DNR board is more likely to recruit, appoint and retain a highly qualified, objective DNR secretary than is any one governor.

Posted in [Mailbag](#) on *Wednesday, September 30, 2009 5:45 pm* [Gov. Jim Doyle](#), [Dnr](#), [Natural Resources Board](#)

[http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article\\_cfb62090-ae12-11de-bb20-001cc4c002e0.html](http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article_cfb62090-ae12-11de-bb20-001cc4c002e0.html)





## Doyle strays from promise

April 24, 2009

GREEN BAY — Feb. 25 marked the fifth annual Conservation Lobby Day, where folks from across the state came together at the State Capitol to speak with their legislators about conservation issues. Past victories of Lobby Day include the signing of the Great Lakes Compact and programs for renewable energy investments.

This year, 600 citizens gathered with four conservation priorities in mind: restoring an independent DNR secretary, stopping global warming in Wisconsin with the Strong Clean Energy Economy Bill, protecting our drinking water, and preserving our groundwater. A diverse crew of conservationists attended Lobby Day this year with interests ranging from public health to clean energy. As an outdoor enthusiast, I wanted to attend Lobby Day to support the Independent DNR Secretary Bill.

For 14 years, the DNR secretary has been appointed by the governor, compromising the DNR's ability to manage the wilderness enjoyed by citizens throughout the state.

As a result, the DNR secretary has become a position vulnerable to political motives and inexperience. I've been disappointed to learn that the governor has had a change of heart and no longer supports this bill. I support this bill because the governor's politics have no place in my canoe.

Vanessa Ashley Lefan

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/article/20090424/GPG0603/904240554/1271/GPG06>

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# YOURDAY

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Monday, January 19, 2009 9A

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## DNR SECRETARY

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### Doyle was right the first time

Do you know why Gov. Jim Doyle used to think that the Department of Natural Resources secretary should be appointed by the Natural Resources Board instead of being a political appointment? Because he wasn't always governor. The governor is the person currently in charge of hand-selecting the DNR secretary.

Plain and simple: When Doyle wasn't the governor, he understood the importance of keeping partisan politics out of natural resource management. Now that he's a part of the political machine, he's changed his tune.

That is *exactly* the reason the selection of the DNR secretary should be left to the Natural Resources Board, a committee of citizens dedicated to serving natural resources, not special interests. The DNR secretary shouldn't be involved in a political power play that completely reduces his credibility. The position should be held by someone with a deep understanding of natural resource management and science, not a crony.

Doyle should think again. What happens when he loses control of the appointment? Will he change his tune again?

**Melissa Wiedmeyer**  
*Milwaukee*

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## WISCONSIN

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### **Change in DNR leader appointment advances**

Legislation to give authority to name the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources to a seven-member board was approved Wednesday by an Assembly committee.

The Assembly Natural Resources committee voted 10-4 for the change, which would end the existing system in which the governor appoints the secretary.

A companion bill is scheduled for a vote before the Senate Transportation, Tourism, Forestry and Natural Resources committee Thursday.

Supporters of the change say a board-appointed DNR secretary would be more insulated from political

pressure than one appointed under the existing system.

Opponents, including Gov. Jim Doyle, say the existing system makes the DNR more accountable because the head of the agency is answerable to the governor, an elected official.

**2B** Thursday, September 3, 2009

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel



October 27, 2009

## Editorial: Take selection power away from governor

The state Senate is poised to act on a bill (AB 138) that would restore the Natural Resources Board's power to appoint the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. It's time to end the long delay and get this passed.

For almost 70 years the seven-member board was responsible for picking the agency head. Even though the governor appoints the board, with Senate consent, this process was considered to be insulated from politics and partisanship.

"Because board members' terms are staggered, it's really hard to stack it," said Rep. Jim Soletski, D-Green Bay, one of a bipartisan group of local legislators who has co-sponsored the bill. They include Reps. Karl Van Roy, R-Howard; Ted Zigmunt, D-Francis Creek; Garey Bies, R-Sister Bay; Jeffrey Mursau, R-Crivitz; Gary Tauchen, R-Bonduel; and Sens. Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay, and Robert Cowles, R-Allouez.

The 1995-97 budget bill changed the process so that the governor appoints the DNR secretary — one of the hundreds if not thousands of unpopular nonfiscal policy items that have been inserted into budget bills over the years.

Time after time at the annual Conservation Congress meetings, citizens have overwhelmingly voted to support giving the authority back to the Natural Resources Board. The Assembly's 61-32 vote on AB 138 last month indicates broad-based support in the Legislature.

The hangup is at the top.

"This isn't very popular with governors," Soletski said.

Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson introduced the change, and Gov. Scott McCallum was content with it. Then-Attorney General Jim Doyle strongly opposed it, but when he became governor he decided he liked the idea after all.

Now that Doyle has decided not to run for a third term, will he veto a popular measure because he has nothing to lose? The Assembly vote indicates an override, which requires a two-thirds majority of 67 votes, is in reach but not yet attainable. More than a few Democrats say they're willing to take him on over this issue.

Or would the outgoing governor sign AB 138 into law because the DNR secretary would no longer be his responsibility?

Speculation about what Doyle might do, of course, is irrelevant until a bill arrives on his desk. First the Senate has to pass the bill.

<http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/article/20091027/GPG0602/910270543/1269/GPG06/Editorial-Take-selection-power-away-from-governor>



## **Lee: Doyle key to DNR's secretary decision**

By Jim Lee • Gannett Wisconsin Newspapers • September 27, 2009

MADISON -- When James Doyle was attorney general, he endorsed the idea that the secretary of the Department of Natural Resources should be appointed by the independent Natural Resources Board.

It was a stance that helped Doyle garner support among the state's hunters, anglers and environmentalists when he subsequently ran for governor.

After all, it seemed obvious to Doyle and most everyone in the outdoor community that the agency managing air, water, fish and wildlife policy should be free of political manipulation.

But when Doyle became governor, he changed his mind ... and DNR secretaries. Suddenly, the prospect of having the DNR head appointed by the governor and the agency controlled as part of the governor's cabinet became more attractive.

Why the flip-flop? Why did Doyle ignore calls to honor and advance his pre-election rhetoric? Only Doyle knows that answer.

But it is telling that the state's leading politician would choose to ignore hundreds of thousands of likely supporters -- there are more than 650,000 deer hunters alone -- to take on responsibility for an agency as undeniably controversial as the DNR.

But what is politics without money, power and influence?

Until 1995, the DNR secretary was appointed by the Natural Resources Board. Under the administration of Gov. Tommy Thompson, a Republican, the position became a cabinet post. Doyle, a Democrat, has been governor since 2003.

The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel recently reported that Doyle has received \$4.14 million since 2003 from business interest groups who oppose turning appointment of the DNR secretary back to the Natural Resources Board.

At the same time, those who favor restoring appointment authority to the Natural Resources Board donated just \$17,175, according to the Journal-Sentinel.

There are no allegations special favors were accorded in return for donations but the amount of money involved certainly creates an uncomfortable atmosphere in a state once prominently known for above-board politics.

Supporters of keeping the DNR secretary in cabinet status say the agency is more accountable when controlled by an elected official. Opponents respond that it is more vulnerable when politics and campaign contributions are provided opportunity to enter the decision-making process. A significant majority of the state's outdoor enthusiasts -- even if they might not agree with all the agency's management policies -- understand the need for an independent DNR. They have soundly endorsed board appointment of the secretary at past statewide spring fish and game hearings.

Jack Nissen of Dousman, president of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the state's largest conservation organization representing 168 hunting, fishing and trapping groups, said recently that he wanted to dispel "the rumor that has been circulated that there are some hunting groups opposed to the bill. There are none."

This past week, at the urging of the Wildlife Federation, the state Assembly voted 61-32 to restore authority of the Natural Resource Board to appoint the secretary. The issue now goes to the state Senate, which passed a similar bill in a previous session by a 2-1 margin.

It appears the legislation is ultimately headed to Doyle's desk with no guarantee sufficient votes are available in either the Assembly or Senate to overcome a potential gubernatorial veto.

Doyle has not indicated if he will sign the measure, which puts the long-time politician in a telling situation.

Which Jim Doyle -- who has indicated he will not seek another term as governor -- will come to the fore?

<http://www.marshfieldnews Herald.com/article/20090927/MNH0204/909270725>

## Editorial, The Janesville Gazette, Aug. 21, 2009

"You can never escape the pressure from legislators calling you up and trying to put political pressure on enforcement cases and regulations. If you report directly to the governor, he is going to get all of those pressures, too, and it rolls down to you."

—Scott Hassett, former DNR secretary

# Return choice of DNR secretary to resources board

Scott Hassett spoke the above words in an interview with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

It sums up well our thoughts on why the choice of Department of Natural Resources secretary should revert to the seven-member Natural Resources Board. That's how it worked for nearly 70 years, as environmental pioneer Aldo Leopold envisioned, until then-Gov. Tommy Thompson snatched that authority in 1995.

A bill to return appointments to the Natural Resources Board passed the Senate in the last legislative session but stalled in the Republican-controlled Assembly. The legislation is back, and last month speakers at a hearing overwhelmingly supported it. Environmentalists, hunting and fishing groups all want the DNR secretary answerable to the citizens board.

Many business groups support gubernatorial appointees. The Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce notes that the governor appoints nearly all other agency leaders and believes the DNR leader should be no different. In a column we printed in February, Janesville's Doug Scott, now president of the Wisconsin Builders Association, argued that letting the governor appoint DNR leaders keeps the agency responsive and accountable to the citizens.

Gov. Jim Doyle likewise apparently now favors gubernatorial control, even though he previously backed appointment by the resources board.

But at another hearing last week, even his lieutenant governor, Barbara Lawton, advocated the legislation:

"There is no way to isolate the DNR from political pressures, but when they wade into the fray—on issues around hunting and fishing and mining and groundwater and triple-hulled barges, etc.—we want complete confidence that the decisions that ensue are made by experts using the best data with full accountability, not a single person to whom they owe their job, but to the people of Wisconsin, whose lives and livelihoods depend on it."

We agree with Lawton and Hassett. Less political influence creates more accountability to Wisconsinites and our rich resources—forests and lakes, rivers and streams, parks and natural areas.

The DNR is different from other agencies. Wisconsin is blessed with outdoor enthusiasts who volunteer much time and energy to nurture our natural resources. That creates a unique relationship between the DNR and those it serves.

Natural Resources Board members—who are appointed by the governor—often have experience in the diverse concerns under DNR control. If the board has smart, effective people, there's no reason to oust the DNR secretary and other DNR administrators just because the face in the Governor's Mansion changes.



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### NATURAL RESOURCES

# Political insulation

The state Assembly should give its full support to a bill to change how the Department of Natural Resources secretary is selected.

The state Assembly is expected to vote Tuesday on a bill that would ease political pressure on the Department of Natural Resources and could provide better protection for the state's wildlife habitats and environment. It's a measure supported by hunters, anglers, environmentalists, good-government advocates, Republicans, Democrats and lots of people who just enjoy the state's great outdoors.

The Assembly should give the bill a resounding "yes" vote.

The bill would move the power to name the secretary of the DNR from the governor's office to the Natural Resources Board. The governor has had the authority only since 1995, when then-Gov. Tommy Thompson thought it would be a good idea to make the secretary a cabinet position, a change that overturned a 67-year-old policy.

At the time, and in his first race for governor, now Gov. Jim Doyle opposed the move, calling Thompson's plans for the DNR "a wholesale attack on the way we protect the environment. I think we're playing with fire here." Doyle has changed his mind since becoming governor, but his original position was the correct one.

Returning the power to the citizen-member board provides the secretary with a layer of insulation from the partisan politics that can affect decisions better left to science

and good public policy. Even when politics doesn't affect a decision — and we agree that most of the time it doesn't — the public can be left with the perception that politics is paramount, which undermines the public's trust. In addition, protection of the state's natural resources is better served by a continuity of professional leadership.

Former DNR secretaries George Meyer and Scott Hassett, Doyle's first appointee to the position, make the same points.

In an interview with the Journal Sentinel's Lee Bergquist in July, Hassett said, "You can never escape the pressure from legislators calling you up and trying to put political pressure on enforcement cases and regulations. If you report directly to the governor, he is going to get all of those pressures, too, and it rolls down to you."

Those who argue against change say the DNR is more responsive and accountable when its secretary reports to an elected official. While that's a good point, the DNR's budget still would have to be approved by the governor and the Legislature, and secretaries still would want elected politicians' support for major policy changes. If additional measures are needed to ensure accountability, they should be added to the bill.

But the bottom line is that this bill should pass, and the state should stop playing with fire.

Should the DNR secretary be appointed by the governor or by the Natural Resources Board? To have your opinion considered for a letter to the editor, email [jsedit@journalssentinel.com](mailto:jsedit@journalssentinel.com).



Published - Wednesday, August 26, 2009

**POST COMMENT | READ COMMENTS** (No comments posted.)

## **Editorial: Posterity needs independent voice at DNR**

What has posterity ever done for me?

That is the fundamental question of environmental conservation. For many years, Wisconsin recognized posterity's precarious seat at the bargaining table and wisely insulated the Department of Natural Resources from political pressure. It's time to restore that buffer.

Most members of the state Legislature want to do just that. Former DNR Secretary George Meyer believes there are veto-proof majorities in both houses of the Legislature for a bill to restore an independent secretary appointed by the DNR board. Wisconsin had such a system until former Gov. Tommy Thompson, prodded by the state business lobby, convinced the Legislature to make the DNR a gubernatorial appointment.

Supporters of a gubernatorial appointee argue that it makes the DNR more accountable. Yes, but accountable to whom? Future generations? Or powerful interests that carry weight with the governor? Meyer believes it's the latter. He told the Milwaukee Journal, "It is very common at the end of a meeting with DNR employees -- and this isn't just blockbuster decisions, but basic issues -- and the answer is that we'll get back to you after we get this past the governor's office."

That's hardly a surprise. So many conservation disputes -- filling wetlands, paving wildlife habitat, developing shorelines, erecting elaborate piers, pumping pollutants into the air and water -- involve short-term gains at the expense of long-term sustainability. The long-term doesn't have a natural constituency and needs an advocate who can't be fired because he or she annoyed a vocal constituent or important campaign contributor.

Most lawmakers recognize that fact, and the bill has strong bi-partisan support. Two local state Senators -- Democrat Kathleen Vinehout and Republican Dale Schultz -- don't agree on much, but they both recognize the value of a truly independent DNR.

Posterity doesn't vote, write letters to editor, attend town halls, hire lobbyists or contribute to political campaigns. But a commitment to posterity is the only thing that protects Wisconsin's natural resources for future generations. Posterity needs a passionate and effective defender, not a political appointee.

<http://www.tomahjournal.com/articles/2009/08/26/opinion/01eddnr.txt>



**OBAMA DOCTRINE? EMERGING FOREIGN POLICY A GAMBLE, A2**

**OF LIFE ON THE FARM A7**

# LA CROSSE Tribune



**Lights out**

**Temporary closer  
offey getting the  
b done, Sports B1**

**MONDAY, April 20, 2009**

## OUR VIEW

# Even in tough times, we can't ignore our natural resources

People in our region have a strong independent spirit. While that may be frustrating at times when we're trying to unite, it's also a trait that enhances the diverse voices and viewpoints necessary in a healthy democracy.

One topic where it's easy to agree is the importance of our region's abundant and precious natural resources. Whether we live in the city or in the country, the streams, bluffs, valleys, forests, soil and water are part of the reason we've chosen to call this region home.

There are many grassroots groups or organizations that have a stake in our resources. One state group that listens to these groups and takes their advice to heart is the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters Institute.

The institute last year held 11 regional listening sessions in the state where its members received input from more than 80 organizations and more than 225 citizens. Tom Stolp, the institute's western organizer based out of Eau Claire, said the hearing in La Crosse was attended by more than 50 people, making it the best-attended in the state.

Stolp said it was feedback and input from these listening

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sessions that helped the institute develop its top four Wisconsin conservation priorities for 2009-10. They are:

**Preserve groundwater:** Manage Wisconsin's groundwater resources to preserve drinking water supplies, lakes streams and wetlands.

**Stop global warming in Wisconsin:** Address the threats of global warming in Wisconsin through clean, renewable energy jobs and energy conservation.

**Restore conservation integrity:** Return the Department of Natural Resources secretary to an independent position and require timely appointments of Natural Resource Board members.

**Protect Wisconsin's drink water:** Protect Wisconsin drinking water supplies making sure agriculture municipal and industrial water are spread safely.

It's doubtful the Legislature will address all these issues during this session when a budget deficit is the main focus. But not all of these proposals have a large cost associated with them. In the case of creating renewable energy, that could be job growth.

There's also the cost of doing nothing. Some parts of Wisconsin, especially in the northeast, have severe groundwater contamination issues forcing homeowners and communities to drill new wells pay for expensive water treatment. That's the very issue that's of concern to citizens in Vernon and Crawford counties where the geography is similar to northeastern Wisconsin where there are environmental concerns with mega-mining operations.

The issues on Wisconsin's legislative plate are many, as are the needs. But let's make sure that we keep at the forefront the preservation of our precious natural resources. Quality life protection is of utmost importance to us all.

# Wisconsin State Journal

## DNR chief choice best made by board

Richard L. Prorise, Madison | Posted: Tuesday, September 29, 2009 5:40 pm | [1 Comment](#)

Thursday's editorial, "Keep DNR chief in gov's Cabinet," concludes that the governor should appoint the DNR secretary because the governor is ultimately responsible to the voters.

I agree that DNR should first and foremost serve the general public. For that reason, however, appointment authority should be returned to the Natural Resources Board.

Your editorial fails to recognize two important facts. First, the governor was elected in part for his early statements that the board should have that authority. Once elected, he conveniently changed his mind.

Second, at both the Assembly and Senate hearings, public sentiment was overwhelmingly in favor of the board rather than the governor appointing the secretary.

The few special interest groups that have spoken in opposition to the board having such authority have something to lose if the governor loses his appointment authority. Perhaps they contributed to the governor's campaign fund and receive special privileges in return. I think the governor's closed door meetings with special interest groups determine many DNR positions.

[http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article\\_0f87f16e-ad49-11de-9ca9-001cc4c03286.html](http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag/article_0f87f16e-ad49-11de-9ca9-001cc4c03286.html)

# The Cap Times

Your Progressive Voice

## Vote to free the DNR from political pressure

Capital Times editorial | Posted: Tuesday, September 22, 2009 5:00 am | [\(3\) Comments](#)



**CRAIG SCHREINER** In this Nov. 22, 2003, file photo, DNR secretary Scott Hassett was on hand at a deer registration station in Barneveld. Hassett who served from 2003 to 2006, was a gubernatorial appointee selected by a Democrat.

What do former secretaries of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources say about how the position they once held should be filled in the future?

Former secretaries - some board appointees, some gubernatorial appointees, some who served under Republican governors, some who served under Democratic governors - all agree: The head of the DNR should be appointed by the independent, nonpartisan Natural Resources Board, not by the governor.

"It is our judgment that a board-appointed system results in greater scientific and professionally based management of the natural resources and provides enhanced citizen involvement in natural resource decision-making," write the men who served as DNR secretaries from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s, including:

- Anthony Earl, who served from 1975 to 1980, a board appointee who went on to be governor.
- C.D. "Buzz" Besadny, who served from 1980 to 1992, a board appointee.
- George E. Meyer, who served from 1993 to 2001, a board and gubernatorial appointee selected by a Republican.

- Darrell Bazzell, who served from 2001 to 2003, a gubernatorial appointee selected by a Republican.
- Scott Hassett, who served from 2003 to 2006, a gubernatorial appointee selected by a Democrat.

Why such unanimity?

Because it is the Wisconsin way.

For the better part of 70 years, Wisconsin's conservation agency was headed by an administrator appointed by a citizen board. That was changed in the 1995 budget bill, when allies of corporate interests got control of the executive and legislative branches of state government.

The Legislature is expected to begin voting today on AB 138, which would restore appointment authority to the Natural Resources Board.

As state Rep. Spencer Black, the Madison Democrat who wrote the Assembly bill, says: "The support of the past five DNR secretaries shows how important it is that decisions about our outdoors be based on science, not politics."

Black's right. It is time to restore and renew the DNR by taking politics out of the appointment process.

Posted in [Editorial](#) on *Tuesday, September 22, 2009 5:00 am Updated: 5:16 am*. [Dnr](#)

The Journal Times.com

MAKE A CONNECTION

## Board should pick DNR secretary

The Journal Times Editorial Board | Posted: Saturday, August 1, 2009 12:00 am | [No Comments Posted](#)

A proposal to buffer the state's lead environmental enforcement agency from political influence is back before the state Legislature again.

This time it might have enough traction to win - and maybe even to withstand a veto by Gov. Jim Doyle.

At issue is whether the head of the state Department of Natural Resources - the secretary - is appointed by the governor or the seven-member state Natural Resources Board that oversees the DNR.

On Tuesday, more than 170 people jammed a Capitol hearing room - many of them hunters, trappers and anglers - and most supported legislation to have the agency headed by a citizen-board appointee. DNR employees and former employees also testified and said the agency has been politicized in the past decade and charged that in some cases regulations have been weakened and enforcement cases have been interfered with.

The board picked the DNR secretary for many years - until 1995, when then-Gov. Tommy Thompson got the Legislature to make it a political appointment made at the whim of the governor. At the time, Doyle opposed Thompson's move, but now that he sits in the catbird seat, he has changed his position and wants the appointment power to stay with the governor. What a surprise! Doyle now contends the agency is more effective when the secretary is part of his Cabinet and the department has the weight of the governor behind it.

Wisconsin's outdoor resources - water resources, air quality and wildlife - have always been highly prized by state residents. Their management and enforcement of laws regulating them should not be subject to quick political changes that ebb and flow with the occupant of the governor's office. More than that, the agency's policies should be developed based on professional judgment, scientific knowledge and the expertise of agency staff - water resources managers, air quality experts, wardens, wildlife managers - and not necessarily bend at the whim of a political supporter of the governor or legislator.

There is no way of isolating the DNR from political pressures - often times they are in the thick of disputes - whether it be the Crandon mine, state deer hunting policies, feuds between snowmobilers and biking enthusiasts over the use of state trails, the impact of commercial well-drilling on an aquifer (Perrier) or the water resources needed to cool a nuclear power plant (Koshkonong).

Time and time again, the agency staff has tried to view those disputes with a dispassionate long-term look at the impacts on state resources.

Those decisions, we believe, are best made by giving the agency staff a slight political buffer by having the head of the agency selected by a citizens' board. Under the old system, the members of the seven-person Natural Resources Board are appointed by the governor, but they have staggered terms, and three must come from northern Wisconsin and three from the southern part of the state. That means a newly elected governor - Republican or Democrat - doesn't have immediate control over the board; it takes a few years before his (or her) appointees have a majority on the board. That buffers the agency from rapid swings in policy based on the political occupant of the governor's office, and it served as a good model for the state for 70 years.

We would urge the Legislature to return to that model.

Posted in [Editorial](#) on *Saturday, August 1, 2009 12:00 am*

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