



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2011 Assembly Bill 502

Assembly Amendments 1 and 7

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ASSEMBLY BILL 502

Assembly Bill 502 requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue wolf harvesting licenses if the wolf is removed from both the federal and Wisconsin lists of endangered and threatened species. Under the bill, both state residents and nonresidents may be issued a wolf harvesting license. A license authorizes both the hunting and trapping of wolves. Under the bill, the DNR may limit the number of licenses issued and the number of wolves that may be harvested. The bill specifies that if the number of persons applying for a wolf harvesting license exceeds the number of licenses that will be issued, the DNR must issue the licenses based on a cumulative preference system.

Season Structure and Closure

The bill requires that there be a single annual open season for both wolf hunting and trapping that begins on October 15 of each year and ends on the last day of February of the following year. The bill directs the DNR to divide the state into up to four wolf harvesting zones. A wolf harvesting license authorizes the license holder to hunt or trap or both only in the zone that is specified on the license.

Under the bill, the DNR is authorized to close a wolf harvesting zone to both hunting and trapping of wolves if the DNR determines that the closure is necessary to effectively manage the state's wolf population. The closure is not required to be promulgated as an administrative rule. The bill specifies that closure of a wolf harvesting zone may not take effect until at least 24 hours after the DNR has posted notice of the closure on its website, announced the closure on its telephone registration system, and issued a press release announcing the closure. Under the bill, the DNR may close a zone to hunting of coyotes during a season that authorizes hunting of deer with firearms if the DNR determines that the closure is necessary to effectively manage the state's wolf population.

Tag Registration

Under the bill, a person who kills a wolf must register the carcass with the DNR on a telephone registration system or through an electronic notification system established by the DNR.

Methods for Hunting Wolves

The bill specifies the types of firearms that may be used for wolf hunting and also allows the use of bows and arrows and crossbows for wolf hunting.

The bill allows the use of dogs to hunt wolves for part of the season (beginning with the first Monday that follows the last day of the regular season that is open to hunting deer with firearms and ending on the last day of February the following year).

The bill authorizes hunting wolves at night for part of the season (beginning with the first Monday following the last day of regular season open to hunting deer with firearms and ending on the last day of February the following year) and authorizes a person to use a flashlight at the point of kill while hunting on foot for wolves during the open season for wolf hunting.

Landowners Hunting or Trapping Wolves

Under the bill, landowners may hunt or trap wolves on their land without a license only during the month of February and only on land located in a zone that is not closed to hunting wolves.

Discharging a Weapon Across a Highway

The bill specifies that the current law prohibition on discharging a firearm, or shooting a bolt or arrow from a bow or crossbow across a highway or within 50 feet of the center of a roadway does not apply to a person who is legally hunting wolves.

Wolf Depredation Program

The bill requires the DNR to administer a program under which payments may be made to persons for death or injury caused by wolves to livestock, to hunting dogs other than those being used in the hunting of wolves, and to pets.

Under the bill, the moneys collected as fees for wolf harvesting licenses are to be used to make payments under this program. If, after making these payments, there are any moneys remaining, the DNR may use the moneys for wolf management and control activities conducted by the DNR.

Rulemaking

Under the bill, the DNR is required to submit rules to implement or interpret the bill's provisions to the Legislative Council staff no later than the fourth month beginning after the effective date of the bill.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1

Assembly Amendment 1 makes all of the following changes to the bill:

- Requires the DNR to divide the entire state into zones and requires that the zones be identified in the DNR's wolf management plan, instead of specifying that the total number of wolf harvesting zones may not exceed four.
- Specifies that if the DNR closes a wolf harvesting zone to hunting of coyotes during a season that authorizes hunting deer with firearms, the DNR may reopen the zone to the hunting of coyotes if the DNR determines that the closure is no longer necessary to effectively manage the state's wolf population, and that the opening and closing of zones is not required to be promulgated as a rule.
- Removes the sections of the bill that authorize landowners to hunt or trap wolves on their land without a license only during the month of February and only on land located in a zone that is not close to hunting.
- Creates duplicate approvals for both resident and nonresident wolf harvesting approvals.
- Adds a provision to the wolf depredation program which specifies that the DNR is authorized to make payments under the program for death or injury caused by wolves only if the death or injury occurs during a period of time when the wolf is not listed on the federal endangered species list and is not listed on the state endangered species list. In addition, the bill authorizes DNR to spend money under the program for its wolf management and control activities only during a period of time when the wolf is not listed on the federal endangered species list and is not listed on the state endangered species list.
- Clarifies that the new funding source created in the bill for the wolf depredation program, which includes all money received from issuing licenses and processing fees, is the source from which the DNR may make wolf depredation payments and repeals the current law provision which establishes that funding from the endangered resources fund must pay for wolf damage.
- Removes the section of the bill that authorizes discharging a firearm, or shooting a bolt or arrow from a bow or crossbow across a highway or within 50 feet of the center of a roadway if the person is legally hunting wolves.
- Requires the DNR to submit rules to implement or interpret the bill's provisions to the Legislative Council staff no later than the eighth month beginning after the effective date of the bill, instead of the fourth month beginning after the effective date of the bill.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 7

Assembly Amendment 7 provides that instead of registering carcasses by telephone or through an electronic notification system, the DNR may require that the person who kills a wolf physically present the entire carcass to the DNR for registration.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On February 22, 2012, the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources recommended adoption of Assembly Amendment 1 on a vote of Ayes, 14; Noes, 0, and recommended adoption of Assembly Amendment 7 on a vote of Ayes, 12; Noes, 2. The committee then recommended passage of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 13; Noes, 1.

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