



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2005 Wisconsin Act 285 [2005 Assembly Bill 286]	Bows Used for Hunting
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Current law authorizes the use of crossbows for hunting only by persons with certain disabilities, persons who are visually handicapped, or residents of this state who are age 65 or older. A crossbow is defined in rules of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as “any device using a bow which, once drawn, is held solely by means other than the effort of the person firing it.” Under the statutes, a crossbow must also have a minimum draw weight of 100 pounds, as well as meeting several other requirements.

There has recently been interest in using compound bows for purposes of hunting, when the compound bow is equipped with a device to hold the bow at full draw. DNR determined that this device met the definition of a crossbow. Because most compound bows do not have a draw weight that is at least 100 pounds, these compound bows could not be used with a device to hold the bow at full draw.

2005 Wisconsin Act 285 authorizes the use of a compound bow equipped with a device that holds the bow at full draw in any circumstance where a crossbow may be used. The Act exempts these compound bows from the requirement to have a minimum draw weight of 100 pounds. The compound bow may also not be constructed with a stock and designed to be shot from the shoulder with one hand.

The other requirements applicable to use of a bow and arrow while hunting also apply, including the requirement that for hunting deer or bear, the bow must have a pull of at least 30 pounds.

Effective Date: Act 285 takes effect on April 21, 2006.

Prepared by: Mark C. Patronsky, Senior Staff Attorney

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MCP:rv:jal

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature’s Web site at: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/>.