

Jeremy Thiesfeldt

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 52nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Assembly Bill 576 The Culled Sturgeon Bill Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Hello Chairman Pronschinske and Honored Members of the Committee. Thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 576.

The Winnebago System's Sturgeon Spearing Season is one of Wisconsin's most unique Winter Traditions.

This bill provides a fundraising tool for sturgeon management and research by giving the Department of Natural Resources the ability to transfer up to 15 culled lake sturgeon from state fish hatcheries to Sturgeon for Tomorrow, Inc. Sturgeon for Tomorrow would prepare the culled fish for taxidermy and award the mounted fish as a prize in a raffle. All proceeds must be used by Sturgeon for Tomorrow to preserve sturgeon habitat, bolster reintroduction, and further sturgeon research.

Sturgeon for Tomorrow was founded in 1977 by a group from the Lake Winnebago region with the goal to help preserve, protect and enhance the sturgeon resource of the Winnebago System. That group is now the largest citizen advocacy group for sturgeon in the world and has raised and donated over \$900,000 for sturgeon research, management, and education since its inception.

We would love your support on this important bill. Thank you.



DAN FEYEN

STATE SENATOR

18th Senate District
(608) 266-5300
Sen.Feyen@legis.wi.gov

PO Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/18/feyen>

To: The Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Assembly Bill 576

Hello, committee members. Thank you for taking time today to hear testimony on Assembly Bill 576.

The Winnebago System's Sturgeon Spearing Season is one of Wisconsin's most unique Winter Traditions. With another season on the horizon, it is important to recognize the work that conservationists have done to ensure the preservation of Lake Sturgeon.

AB 576 provides another fundraising tool for sturgeon management and research by giving the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the ability to transfer up to 15 lake sturgeon from state fish hatcheries to Sturgeon for Tomorrow, Inc. (SFT). SFT would prepare the fish for taxidermy to be awarded as a prize in a raffle. The bill stipulates that all proceeds must be used by SFT to preserve sturgeon habitat, bolster reintroduction, and further sturgeon research.

Under current law, it is illegal for any organization other than the DNR to possess sturgeon from state fish hatcheries. This bill is not a mandate for the DNR, but simply allows this transfer to legally take place.

Sturgeon for Tomorrow is one of the many conservation organizations in our state doing great work to preserve and protect our natural resources for future generations. This bill provides a simple legislative fix giving Sturgeons for Tomorrow another tool to continue their mission.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. With that, I am happy to answer any questions the committee has.