



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

May 19, 2010

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY:

I am vetoing 2009 Wisconsin Assembly Bill 371 in its entirety. This bill would make several changes to the hunting of bear including allowing a Class B license holder to shoot and kill a bear that was already shot and wounded by a Class A license holder in the same hunting party, requiring the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow the training of dogs during an open bear hunting season that allows hunting with a dog, allowing a person under the age of sixteen to engage in permitted activities of a Class B license without holding that license, establishing a weekend in August for those without a license to engage in permitted activities of a Class B license and requiring DNR to establish Labor Day and the day after Labor Day as days to allow bear hunting without the use of dogs (this provision sunsets December 31, 2012).

These changes to bear hunting were introduced and passed against the stated wishes of a majority of citizens who participated in the 2010 Conservation Congress Spring Hearings. Several of the provisions included in AB 371 were put to citizens for a vote and every issue, except the youth Class B activities, were opposed by a majority of participants. I value the role that the Conservation Congress plays in this state and object to legislation that bypasses that process.

The provisions that allow a Class B license holder to shoot and kill a bear that was already shot and wounded by a Class A license holder in their hunting party were vaguely designed and will be hard to enforce. The bill does not contain a definition of "same hunting party" and while the bill requires the Class A license holder to authorize a Class B license holder to shoot, the bill does not require the Class A license holder to be physically present. Group hunting for deer requires each member to be in visual or voice contact without the aid of an electronic amplifying device (except a hearing aid). It will be difficult for wardens to ascertain who made the first shot and whether the Class A license holder authorized the shooting in advance, or only after the fact.

Allowing dog training during the open season for hunting bear with the use of dogs may also increase conflicts in the woods between hunters who use dogs and those who hunt with bait. Hunters may already train dogs for two months during the summer and allowing this additional time is unfair to hunters who have waited years to finally obtain a hunting license and spent hours over bait piles or hunting with other methods, and have their time and effort disturbed by packs of dogs.

Requiring the DNR to establish a bear hunting season without the use of dogs on Labor Day and the day after Labor Day also sets up the potential for dangerous interactions between bear hunters and the thousands of people who enjoy the extended weekend in the state's parks, forests and trails. This interaction would also be disruptive to the hunters, who need peaceful surroundings for a successful harvest and not bikers, hikers and campers disturbing their bait areas. While attempting to give additional time to bear hunters who hunt without the use of dogs may be an admirable goal, Labor Day weekend is not the time to do so.

I would normally support the provisions in the bill to encourage new hunters to try activities related to bear hunting; however, I cannot support the other provisions at this time. Citizens have spoken, via the spring hearings, and opposed many of these measures. Conflicts in the woods must be avoided whenever possible and this bill would set up potential conflicts between hunters, landowners and outdoor enthusiasts.

Respectfully submitted,

JIM DOYLE
Governor