

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

DNR 2/20/2012

LRB Number	11-3947/1	Introduction Number	SB-411	Estimate Type	Original
Description Hunting and trapping of wolves, providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures, extending the time limit for emergency rule procedures, and making an appropriation					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Bill Summary

This bill requires the Department to issue wolf hunting and trapping licenses if the wolf is removed from the U.S. and Wisconsin lists of endangered and threatened species. The bill requires that there be a single annual season for wolf hunting and trapping from October 15 through the end of February and requires the Department to divide the state into up to four wolf harvesting zones.

If the number of persons applying for a wolf harvesting license exceeds the number of licenses that will be issued, the Department shall issue the licenses based on a cumulative preference system, and it allows the transfer of licenses and preference points under certain circumstances.

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. A crossbow may be used by any person holding a wolf harvesting license. For hunting wolves, the bill allows the use of dogs for part of the season and allows the baiting of wolves with bait other than animal byproducts except for liquid scents. Under the bill, the types of traps that may be used for trapping wolves must include cable restraints.

The bill requires the Department 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 current law, the Department has already promulgated rules establishing such a program. 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 Department may use the moneys for wolf management and control activities.

Fiscal Effect

Several programs within the Department, including Law Enforcement, Wildlife Management, Endangered Species, and Customer and Outreach Services, would be involved in the implementation of this bill.

A. Bureau of Law Enforcement

a. Use of dogs and bait to hunt wolves, along with hunting at night for wolves are all current legal methods for hunting coyotes, bear and bobcat. With the addition of the wolf, it will likely require additional education and enforcement as hunters and trappers become familiar with this new harvestable species. The cost the additional level of enforcement is indeterminate at this time.

b. Use of traps with cable restraints--under the bill, the types of traps that may be used for trapping wolves must include cable restraints. The Department anticipates there may be incidental catches of non-target species with cable restraints used during the entire wolf trapping season. When trappers are unable to release deer, bear or other non-target species unharmed, it will require staff time and travel to respond to and assist with the release or disposal of such animals. The costs associated with increased workload caused by increased use and larger cable restraints is indeterminate at this time.

c. Shooting wolves with large caliber rifles, handguns and shotguns loaded with slugs and buckshot from, across and down public roads that have dirt or gravel surfaces is currently authorized in this bill. Shooting down, across and from public roadways with large single projectiles presents safety issues which could result in increased incidents of vehicles, buildings and individuals accidentally being shot on and near such road ways. Such accidental shooting incidents would require investigation by local law enforcement agencies as well as Department wardens.

d. This bill makes it illegal to possess, control or transport any untagged wolf. However, this bill would allow the owner or occupant of any land and their family members to trap wolves year round and hunt wolves on their lands during the month of February each year without a limit on the number of wolves that may be harvested and no requirement to be issued carcass tags for such wolves which can be validated and attached at time of harvest. The only requirement is for phoning in or reporting the harvest electronically. Not establishing a tagging requirement for wolves harvested by owners and occupants of lands will make it difficult to enforce other laws requiring other wolves to be tagged immediately. It will also likely result in a fair number of complaints of individuals in possession of untagged wolves which will need to be investigated to determine if they were harvested lawfully by owners or occupants of private lands or not. The cost in staff time and travel could be significant, but is indeterminate at this time.

B. Bureau of Wildlife Management

a. Population monitoring and harvest planning--The Department will need to monitor populations and conduct harvest planning to meet federal requirements and to "effectively manage the state's wolf population", as required by the bill. Many of these tasks are currently conducted by existing wolf advisory and science committees. When wolf hunting and trapping are allowed, annually establishing harvest quotas will be a new task. Because the Department has an existing process in place for collecting information and making wolf management decisions, no new significant costs are anticipated.

b. Pelt tagging--In addition to harvest registration, which is addressed below, in-person pelt tagging of harvested animals will be needed in order to meet requirements resulting from U.S. participation in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). While not a requirement of the bill, it is a federal requirement for states that allow the harvest and interstate transportation and trade of certain species. Some new costs will be incurred by law enforcement and wildlife management staff to meet with successful hunters and trappers and issue CITES tags. However, the Department already organizes pelt tagging days for other CITES species, bobcat and otter, and may be able to tag wolves concurrently with the other species. Resulting new costs should be minimal and can be absorbed within the Department's current budget.

c. Public outreach--The Department invests significant effort into communicating with the public about hunting and trapping opportunities and the management of harvested species. These investments are made primarily by customer & outreach, wildlife, law enforcement and the science services bureaus. Since the Department is already organized to handle these duties, additional efforts related to wolves can be supported with currently available resources.

d. Administrative rules--The Bureau of Wildlife Management, in cooperation with the Bureaus of Law Enforcement, Customer & Outreach Services, and Legal Services, will be responsible for promulgating permanent and emergency rules that support the implementation of a wolf hunting and trapping season. It is generally estimated that the effort of various staff will amount to the equivalent of two months of a staff specialist's time: 320 hours x \$50.00/hour = \$16,000. These costs would be one-time expenses that could be absorbed within the Department's current budget.

f. License sales--Wisconsin has not held a wolf hunting season in modern times. A wolf harvest quota and resulting number of harvest licenses to be issued is not known at this time. The primary way of generating revenue will be through the sales of \$10 applications (\$9.75 plus a 25 cent vendor fee) for wolf harvest licenses. Although the number of applications that would be sold cannot be accurately estimated, it is likely that there will be interest in this new opportunity. In 2009, the first year of Idaho's wolf season, 26,428 licenses were issued. Idaho allowed anyone to purchase a license but closed their seasons early when harvest quotas were met. Because anyone could purchase a license, those numbers might be indicative of potential interest in harvest license applications in Wisconsin. The Department also has data from Wisconsin for bear that also allows for preference points and a drawing to issue permits. In 2011, 27,793 people applied for a harvest tag and 76,060 people applied for a preference permit. If interest is comparable to that which was generated in Idaho, a possible outcome in Wisconsin is that 25,000 applicants buying applications that cost \$9.75 would generate ~ \$250,000 for the depredation program. If it is closer to the interest level that exists for bear, it could be as high as 100,000 applicants, or ~\$1 Million.

C. Endangered Resources

The Bureau of Endangered Resources (BER) is responsible for administering the wolf management program. The wolf management program has three main components: a) wolf recovery and surveys; b) wolf investigations; and c) wolf depredation payments.

a. Wolf recovery and surveys are funded from a variety of sources, including state funding, private gifts, Pittman-Robertson federal funding, and memorandums of agreement for aerial surveys with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Wisconsin Indian Tribes. In FY11, recovery and surveys expenditures totaled \$497,600, which includes 1.75 FTE that are federally-funded, non-game mammalian ecologists which the Bureau currently dedicates to wolf recovery activities.

b. Wolf investigations have previously been funded primarily from federal dollars provided by the USDA's Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS). In FY11, the APHIS amounts for these services were approximately \$260,000. As of the end of FY11, direct federal funding for APHIS ended, leaving the Bureau to pay for these continued inspection services. It is important to note that Pittman-Robertson funding cannot be used specifically for lethal control mechanisms, but only for investigations related to wolf depredations. In FY11, the total damage payments from wolves were \$213,000, which included \$78,100 in a federal wolf livestock demonstration grant. In FY12, the total wolf damage payments are estimated to exceed \$320,000.

c. The bill creates a hunting and trapping season for wolves and establishes a new appropriation for the wolf depredation program to be funded from the licenses and processing fees collected. The bill also states that if the Department determines that the amounts for payments available from s.20.370 (1) (fs) and the amount from the new licenses and fees is insufficient in a given fiscal year, the Department shall make the payments on a prorated basis. The bill further states that if moneys remain after payments for wolf depredation in a given fiscal year, in the following fiscal year remaining moneys can be used for management and control activities.

As written, the bill would establish that wolf depredations and management would be funded through hunting/trapping license revenues. However, an existing provision in statute would also be in effect that directs the department to fund management and depredations out of the Endangered Resources Account (available tax check off, donations, and license plate sales).

With wolves delisted the department will have the ability to remove problem wolves. Given this management flexibility, the Department assumes that depredation payments will drop below the \$300,000 level annually. However, if depredations did stay at the \$300,000 level, fees generated from permit applications and wolf hunting and trapping licenses, along with donations, license plate sales and the tax check off will need to generate at least \$300,000 annually or the damage payments will be prorated.

D. Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services

The Bureau would incur one-time costs related to the issuance of wolf trapping and hunting licenses. These one-time costs are as follows:

a. An estimated 235 hours of computer programming time for touchscreen and internet modifications, programming for the development of a license/carcass tag on via touchscreen/internet, and the development of a wolf harvest registration database and batch import process. Costs are estimated at \$22,300 (235 hrs. x \$95/hr.).

b. Changes to the harvest registration phone and online systems will take approximately 50 hours of Department staff time at an estimated cost of \$2,500.00

Total estimated one-time costs for Customer and Outreach Services = \$24,800

Long-Range Fiscal Implications

Fiscal Estimate Worksheet - 2011 Session

Detailed Estimate of Annual Fiscal Effect

Original
 Updated
 Corrected
 Supplemental

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Description Hunting and trapping of wolves, providing an exemption from emergency rule procedures, extending the time limit for emergency rule procedures, and making an appropriation			
I. One-time Costs or Revenue Impacts for State and/or Local Government (do not include in annualized fiscal effect): Estimated one-time costs of \$24,800 for programming and implementation by the Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services, and \$16,000 for promulgation of administrative rules.			
II. Annualized Costs:		Annualized Fiscal Impact on funds from:	
		Increased Costs	Decreased Costs
A. State Costs by Category			
	State Operations - Salaries and Fringes	\$	\$
	(FTE Position Changes)		
	State Operations - Other Costs		
	Local Assistance		
	Aids to Individuals or Organizations		
	TOTAL State Costs by Category	\$	\$
B. State Costs by Source of Funds			
	GPR		
	FED		
	PRO/PRS		
	SEG/SEG-S		
III. State Revenues - Complete this only when proposal will increase or decrease state revenues (e.g., tax increase, decrease in license fee, etc.)			
		Increased Rev	Decreased Rev
	GPR Taxes	\$	\$
	GPR Earned		
	FED		
	PRO/PRS		
	SEG/SEG-S		
	TOTAL State Revenues	\$	\$
NET ANNUALIZED FISCAL IMPACT			
		<u>State</u>	<u>Local</u>
	NET CHANGE IN COSTS	\$	\$
	NET CHANGE IN REVENUE	\$	\$
Agency/Prepared By		Authorized Signature	Date
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