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WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Assembly Bill 66
Testimony of Representative Joan Ballweg
Assembly Committee on Transportation
April 10, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Ripp and committee members, for scheduling this hearing on Assembly Bill 66 (AB 66). Senator Luther Olsen and I introduced this legislation to expand the current vehicle registration exemption for the popular Wisconsin Dells' Ducks.

Under current law, certain vehicles operated on the highway are not required to be registered with the Department of Transportation. These vehicles include amphibious motor vehicles capable of carrying at least ten passengers when the vehicle is used for sightseeing purposes, registered as a boat with the Department of Natural Resources, and operated on a highway for a distance of not more than two miles.

This bill allows an amendment to the vehicle registration exemption that applies to amphibious motor vehicles operated on a highway for a distance of not more than five miles, changed from the current two miles, if they otherwise meet the criteria described above.

This change is to reflect the need for amphibious motor vehicles, or Ducks, to travel around the rapidly expanding Wisconsin Dells Area, which continues to see increased tourism every year. As more road construction comes to the area, the Ducks are required to travel further in order to detour around closed roads. They have also started picking up and dropping off tourists at popular resort destinations. These are examples of why the current two mile exemption no longer satisfies the need.

The Ducks first came to Wisconsin Dells in the 1940's and the tours remain a popular attraction that allows visitors to the area's famous sandstone formations and the beauty of the Wisconsin River by land and water, as well as learn about the Duck's history as part of America's presence abroad during World War II.

Thank you for your consideration on this bill. I have with me today Dan Gavinski, general manager of Wisconsin Ducks, Inc. We are happy to answer any questions you have.