



Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage
Required Credentials for Disabled Permit Verification
2015 Assembly Bill 112

Good morning Chairman Ott and committee members. My name is Linda Olver, Policy Advisor in the Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Thank you for the opportunity to testify for informational purposes on Assembly Bill 112, which expands the list of health care providers authorized to verify a disabled permit applicant is physically disabled.

State law currently allows DNR to issue four types of disabled hunting permits and a permit which authorizes trolling with the aid of an electric trolling motor. Additionally, a reduced-rate fishing license is available for those receiving certain disability benefits or whose sight is impaired:

- The Class A hunting permit may be issued to an applicant with a specific permanent disability that limits their ability to ambulate.
- The Class B permit may be issued to an individual with a temporary disability which restricts mobility or ambulation due to injury or operative procedures.
- The Class C permit may be issued to a person who is visually handicapped.
- The Class D permit may be issued to a person who has an amputation or other loss of one or more arms at or above the elbow, who has a permanent substantial loss of function in one or both arms, or who cannot place their nondominant or dominant hand in specific positions.
- A trolling permit may be issued to a person who has a substantial loss of function in one or both arms or one or both hands and fails to meet the minimum standards for specific tests.
- The reduced-rate fishing license for the disabled provides an annual fishing license approval to those who receive certain disability benefits or have visual impairment for a discount of \$7 instead of the normal \$20 fee.

The department uses a single application form for all disabled permit types. State statutes require disabled hunting or trolling permit applicants to submit an application form including a written statement or report prepared and signed by an authorized health care professional verifying that the applicant is physically disabled no more than 6 months before the application.

Based upon the eligibility criteria verified by the authorized health care professional on the application, department staff generally has the information available to issue the appropriate disabled permit type or to deny the application. For the issuance of a reduced rate fishing license for the disabled, the department accepts a Social Security Disability Award Notice, a Social Security benefits letter, a letter or notice of Railroad Retirement Disability, or a signed statement from a licensed physician or optometrist.

State law currently limits those who may verify an applicant is physically disabled to a licensed physician, licensed chiropractor, or a license podiatrist.

Thank you for your time.

I hope you find this information helpful as you consider AB 112. Chris Thielman from the department is here with me today to try answering questions you may have regarding AB 112 and how current law is implemented by the Department of Natural Resources.

Public hearing testimony for assembly bill 112

Offered by Dan Rossow

1. Thanks for inviting me to join in on this public hearing.
2. First let me say I'm a Disabled Vietnam Veteran that is rated 100% service connected disabled. I live in northern Wisconsin.
3. While applying for my Disabled hunters' permit I was notified that my Primary Care provider through the veterans' administration was not a sufficient signature for that permit, Per Wisconsin statute 29.193. Even with a letter from the Veterans Administration showing I am 100% service connected disabled along with the letter from my primary care provider it still was not acceptable.
4. In rural Wisconsin the smaller clinics do not have a MD. On site.
5. Adding Nurse Practitioner and Physicians Assistants to the list of authorized signatures today gives you the ability to help a great number of Veterans through the state.
6. On behalf of myself and all the Veterans I thank you for taking the time to hear me today.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KATHY BERNIER

April 1, 2015

**Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
and Sporting Heritage –
Testimony on Assembly Bill 112**

Good morning Chairman Ott and committee members. Thank you for scheduling AB 112 for this public hearing and allowing me time to present testimony in favor of the bill.

The idea for this bill was brought to me by a constituent, J.R. Black, who is here today to testify. J.R. told me a story about his father-in-law, Dan Rossow who has been a long time hunter but was unable to participate last year because he could not get to the Tomah VA, from Boyd, to have his DNR Disability Permit Authorization Form completed by his primary care physician, which would allow him special permissions during hunting season.

By allowing physician assistants and nurse practitioners (referred to in the bill as “advance practice nurse prescribers”) to sign and certify disability designations for the DNR disability permit, Mr. Russow would have went hunting in 2014.

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As you may be aware, there are wide-spread reports of impending doctor shortages. This is especially - and already - true in rural areas of Wisconsin. A 2011 report by the Wisconsin Hospital Association estimates that by 2030 Wisconsin will face a shortage of 2,000 doctors that will “severely limit access to health care services in the state – particularly in northern Wisconsin.” With an aging population the additional options to save time and travel will be a big help.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman and committee members for your interest in this bill and for holding this hearing. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



DEVIN LEMAHIEU

STATE SENATOR

DATE: April 1, 2015
RE: **Testimony on 2015 Assembly Bill 112**
TO: The Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage
FROM: Senator Devin LeMahieu

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for taking time today to discuss Assembly Bill 112, regarding disabled hunting permits.

Wisconsin law provides for a variety of hunting, fishing and recreational use permits designed to help people with disabilities enjoy the state's natural resources. DNR disability permits include:

- hunting from a stationary vehicle
- using a laser sight
- using an adaptive device to facilitate the use of a firearm
- fishing while trolling with an electric motor
- using a mobility device on department lands
- participation in disabled deer hunt
- discounted fishing license (\$7)

Assembly Bill 112 simply adds physician assistants and advanced nurse prescribers (nurse practitioners) to the list of medical professionals that can verify a person's disability in order to approve their special DNR permit. Currently, only physicians, chiropractors, podiatrists, and optometrists are allowed to certify these applications.

Unfortunately, this requirement has posed an obstacle to individuals in rural areas of our state where individuals have to travel longer distances to see their doctor. Extending this opportunity to physician assistants and nurse practitioners will make it easier for people with disabilities to get their DNR permits approved.

As you can see, this proposal has received bi-partisan support in both houses. I hope you will join us in supporting individuals with disabilities through this improvement to our state's laws.