



# DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

*Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry  
Public Hearing, Senate Bill 298  
Tuesday, January 05, 2016*

Chairman Tiffany and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee today on Senate Bill 298 relating to trolling permits issued to persons whose sight is impaired. Currently under Wisconsin Statute 29.193, "disability" is defined as someone who has an amputation of at least one arm above the wrist or has permanent loss of function in at least one arm as confirmed by a physician or chiropractor.

Trolling means fishing by trailing any lure, bait, or similar device to attract fish from a boat propelled by means other than drifting, pedaling, paddling, or rolling. According to the DNR, trolling is broadly allowed in surrounding states and Canadian territories.

The purpose of the bill is to permanently codify a DNR trolling rule revision that includes blindness as a disability which is set to expire at the end of the 2017 fishing season. The bill allows a visually impaired individual and an assistant to troll in Wisconsin.

Without this bill, the visually impaired could be prohibited from trolling in the future.

In a meeting on July 23, 2015, the Disability and Advisory Council passed a recommendation to accept this legislation.

In the Assembly, the companion bill passed committee 15-0.

Thank you for the time to testify this morning.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duey Stroebel".

Senator Duey Stroebel



## Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry

### *Trolling Permits for Sight Impaired Individuals*

### *2015 Senate Bill 298*

Good morning Chairman Tiffany 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 Senate Bill 298, which allows sight-impaired individuals to qualify for a trolling permit.

Current administrative code, in effect until May 4, 2018, allows all anglers to troll on all inland waters with 1 hook, bait or lure per angler (and 2 hooks, baits or lures maximum per boat), unless more hooks, baits or lures are specifically authorized statewide. Despite the expanded trolling opportunity available to all anglers, trolling *permits* provide opportunities not afforded all anglers under current administrative code.

Under current law, an angler holding a trolling permit and either a current fishing license or fishing license exemption may fish or troll in the waters of this state using an electric motor. Further, a person assisting a disabled angler (Class A license, Class B license, or a trolling permit) in the same boat may also fish or troll if he or she also holds a current fishing license or a license exemption. Statute specifies an angler with a trolling permit may use an electric motor notwithstanding any local ordinances that prohibit the use of motor boats on navigable waters. Note an individual holding a valid trolling permit is not subject to the line restriction specified in NR 20.06 and so they may troll in any manner that does not exceed 3 hooks, baits or lures.

The types of disabled permits that allow motorized trolling on all inland waters, regardless of local regulations otherwise and the number of those permits currently valid include:

- Trolling permits – 154
- Some Class B permits – 834
- All Class A permits – 6,905
- In total: 7,893 valid disabled permits authorizing trolling

Current law requires the department to issue a trolling permit to any person meeting the following requirements:

1. Has an amputation or other loss of one or more arms above the wrist; or
2. Has a permanent substantial loss of function in one or both arms or one or both hands and fails to meet the minimum standards of any one of the following standard tests, administered under the direction of a licensed physician or a licensed chiropractor:
  - a. Upper extremity pinch.
  - b. Grip.
  - c. Nine-hole peg.

SB 298 proposes to expand the eligibility for a trolling permit to people who produce a certificate from a licensed physician or optometrist stating that sight is impaired to the degree they cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses. This mirrors one of four qualifying criteria for the resident disabled fishing license discount.

In total, about 7,900 permits allowing trolling are currently held by people with disabilities. The department cannot determine the number of sight impaired individuals that would either qualify or apply for a trolling permit under the expanded qualifying criteria.

