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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage,

Thank you for taking the time this morning to consider Assembly Bill 490, regarding hunting fees for veterans who are 70 years or older. As a show of appreciation to the men and women who served our country and still participate in deer hunting, this legislation would lower the resident deer hunting license from \$21.25 to \$14.25 for veterans who are 70 years and older. The bill also eliminates the \$2.25 charge to use a crossbow if a veteran over 70 years old has a bow hunting license.

As a committee, we've made significant strides to encourage participation in outdoor recreational sports like hunting and fishing. This bill will help ensure that our veterans have opportunities to participate in those activities even if they are on a limited budget. This gesture could have a significant positive impact on our population of aging veteran hunters. Optimistically, this could increase participation across all levels of hunting as veterans and their family members participate together in hunting activities.

In their fiscal note, the Department of Natural Resources states that the fiscal impact of this bill would be able to be absorbed into their budget.

The conservation congress overwhelmingly supported this proposal in their 2017 spring questionnaire as it was approved in all 72 counties by a vote 3,314 to 847.



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: October 11, 2017
RE: **Testimony on 2017 Assembly Bill 490**
TO: The Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage
FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

Thank you to Chairman Kleefisch and the members of the committee for accepting my written testimony on Assembly Bill 490, which reduces the fee for a resident deer hunting licenses for veterans 70 years or older.

When I attended the Coloma Chicken Chew this summer, I met Mr. Perez, who proposed this bill idea to me. Mr. Perez said it was included on the 2017 Spring Conservation Congress questionnaire and approved. (I checked out the results that Monday and found it had passed by a vote of 3314 to 847).

I had my office reach back out to Mr. Perez and say we would like to do legislation on his idea, and he suggested eliminating the crossbow license upgrade fee as well. After speaking to the Department of Natural Resources and asking them to "ballpark" the numbers, the fiscal estimate was reasonable. I then spoke to Rep. Skowronski and asked if he would be willing to author this legislation with me.

This bill seems like a small way that we could show appreciation to all the veterans who sacrificed for us, and still enjoy participating in hunting. As you can see from the Department's fiscal estimate, they anticipate they could absorb the cost of this legislation. This is a very small cost to display gratefulness for those we owe so much to. I hope you will join me in supporting Assembly Bill 490.

Thank you for your consideration.



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Dale Maas, Secretary
Joel Taylor, Public Relations
Joe Weiss, Historian

October 10, 2017

Thank you Chair Kleefisch and Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage for this opportunity to come before you in support of AB 490. I am Al Shook Vice-Chair of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress.

This legislation is a testament to what a great process we have in Wisconsin to deal with changes to rules and laws pertaining to hunting, fishing and trapping. Nowhere else in the nation is there something in place that would allow the story of how this legislation came before you other than the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearing process we have here in Wisconsin. Every year, citizens of this state have the opportunity to present their proposal for a change in our fish and game laws. This is exactly how the process should work; any average citizen with a suggestion for a change, following careful consideration and input by the public, can find his or her idea coming before the legislature for consideration. It is truly a grass roots process, for the people and by the people.

In 2016, a gentleman from Waushara County introduced a resolution at the annual DNR Spring Hearing and WCC County Meeting proposing to reduce the deer license fee for Wisconsin military veterans 70 years of age and older. That year this resolution passed in Waushara County by a 6 to 1 margin. In 2017 this proposal was presented statewide as a WCC advisory question and passed by a vote of 3314 ayes to 847 nays, with all 72 counties supporting the proposal.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is support of AB 490 and asks that this committee please vote to advance this to the full assembly for consideration. Thank you for your consideration.

Presented by Vice-Chair Al Shook.

Larry Bonde, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.