



JILL BILLINGS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

February 10, 2022

Chairman Stafsholt and Committee Members

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 422 which works to improve the accessibility of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) licensing system—GoWild.

SB 422 is a bipartisan proposal that would allow people to use state identification cards to verify residency using the DNR's GoWild system in the same way that those possessing drivers' licenses do. Currently, with certain exceptions, state law prohibits the use of state identification card data. Because of this, the DNR does not have statutory authority to access the state identification card database in the way it can access driver's license records to validate residency and therefore, creating burdensome obstacles for certain individuals to overcome.

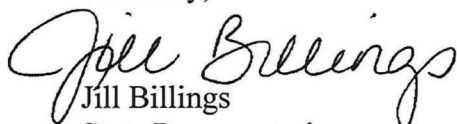
There are many reasons why an individual may possess a state identification card rather than a drivers' license, including various disabilities that may prevent a person from driving. Currently, individuals using state identification cards must either call a DNR service number or visit a licensing agent or DNR Service Center to verify residency. SB 422 would allow all Wisconsin residents to use the DNR's online GoWild system to verify residency, thus removing an unnecessary and time-consuming burden that currently exists for certain Wisconsinites seeking to participate in outdoor recreation.

I introduced this legislation in honor of Steve Johnson, a blind individual from the La Crosse area, who passed in 2019. He dedicated his life to many service organizations, including the Wisconsin Disability Advisory Council, the Wisconsin Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired, the North American Squirrel Association, and more. Steve worked to raise awareness and create change on issues impacting those with disabilities, including this statute change.

Please join me in supporting Senate Bill 422 to make outdoor recreation more accessible for all Wisconsinites, regardless of disability status.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Jill Billings
State Representative
95th Assembly District



Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues

2021 Senate Bill 422

*Access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals
issued by the Department of Natural Resources
February 10, 2022*

Good morning Chair Stafsholt and members of the Committee. My name is Linda Olver, and I am the Customer and Outreach Services Policy Advisor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 422 (SB 422), related to access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals issued by the Department of Natural Resources.

Current law establishes a variety of hunting, trapping, and fishing approvals and specifies fees that are, in general, lower for residents than nonresidents. Wisconsin Statute specifies that a resident hunting, trapping or fishing approval may be issued only to a person who presents to the issuing agent or the department definite proof of his or her identity and that he or she is a resident. Current law as it relates to purchasing approvals authorized under Ch. 29, Wis. Stats., defines a resident as anyone who has maintained a permanent abode in the state for at least 30 days prior to applying for an approval, which must be established by demonstrating domiciliary intent. Under current law, evidence of domiciliary intent includes voting, paying personal income taxes, or obtaining a driver's license at a location in the state. SB 422 adds that domiciliary intent may also be satisfied by obtaining an identification card issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT).

Current law requires DOT to maintain records of all identification card holders and generally prohibits DOT from disclosing the records to any person. This prohibition has prevented the DNR from offering resident approvals to those who only possess a State ID. SB 422 requires DOT to provide DNR electronic access to identification card records for the purpose of verifying the residency of applicants for DNR approvals. The provisions of SB 422 allow those who do not possess a driver's license, such as some individuals with disabilities and youth, to use their State ID in the same manner a resident may use their Wisconsin driver's license to prove residency at license agents and online.

~~The department will incur modest ongoing costs to compensate the Department of Transportation for server and media costs to access State ID records, as is currently done for driver records. The department will incur one-time costs of \$8,000 or less to make necessary changes to the Go Wild system, train customer service representatives and retail license agents, update department web pages and hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations, and update the department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Transportation.~~

Finally, SB 422 includes a helpful delayed effective date, providing six months for implementation.

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, we would like to thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

2/3/2022

Committee Chair Senator Rob Stafsholt
Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues
Wisconsin State Senate

Dear Sir:

I am writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 422. I am a vision impaired person who holds a Wisconsin identification card rather than a driver's license because of my disability. Because of current law I cannot use the "Go Wild" web portal to purchase hunting or fishing licenses because I cannot use an official Wisconsin ID card as issued by the Wisconsin DOT to establish my residency. The ID card has the same information and format as a driver's license and even has the star on top to indicate it meets federal standards and can be used, for example, to board an airliner.

I understand that 29% of Wisconsin residents do not have a driver's license for one reason or another and I imagine that many would love to fish or hunt in the state. It's pretty clear that the law as currently written was simply an oversight. Ironically the people who are forced to go somewhere to get their hunting and fishing licenses are the very folks who may have trouble getting there because they do not have easy access to transportation because they do not have a DL.

I encourage you and the Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural issues to support Senate Bill 422. Thankfully this is a very easy error to correct.

Sincerely,

Greg Smith
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February 10, 2022

Dear Sen. Stafsholt and Senator Committee on Sporting Heritage members.

On behalf of Wisconsin's residents living with vision impairment, other disabilities and anyone who holds a State of Wisconsin identification card rather than a driver's license, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 422 and move the bill to the full Senate for consideration.

The mission of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is to promote the dignity and empowerment of all of Wisconsin's more than 101,000 residents living with vision loss through advocacy, education and vision services. The fastest growing segment of our population is older adults, who lose sight due to diseases such as diabetes, macular degeneration and glaucoma. The number of Wisconsin residents experiencing life-changing vision loss is expected to double by 2050, directly impacting many Wisconsin families.

Those of us with vision loss and people with other disabilities are unable to legally drive and therefore hold a Wisconsin identification card instead of a driver's license. SB 422 seeks to amend an issue with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' "Go Wild" system, which requires a Wisconsin driver's license to set up an account to allow for repeat visits to the site to purchase hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational licenses. Amending the statute would allow all qualified Wisconsin residents to have equal access to these opportunities.

People like Steve Johnson, for whom the bill is named, would have equitable access to this valuable state service. Until his death a few years ago, Steve was an avid fisher, hunter and outdoors person. He was fully blind, was a member of our board of directors, an articulate advocate for the visually impaired and dedicated public servant. Steve believed that anyone who wanted should have access to all the amazing outdoor things Wisconsin has to offer. Amending statute by passage of SB 422 would keep Steve's dream alive.

By amending state law in this instance to recognize the legal use of the Wisconsin state ID, further precedent is set to avoid repeating these drafting issues in the future. All too often people who do not hold a driver's license and do not drive are not afforded the same rights and access as those with a valid driver's license. Both are equally valid forms of identification, and all our state systems need to recognize them as such.

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is grateful for the bipartisan effort to create equitable access to state services. With the legislative floor session ending in early spring, please schedule an executive session to vote in the affirmative of the bill at your earliest convenience, so the bill can move through both houses and onto the Governor to be signed into law – Steve's Law.

Respectfully,

Denise Jess
Executive Director



February 10, 2022

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, and Rural Issues
Senator Stafsholt, Chair
State Capitol, Rm 15 S
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Senator Stafsholt and committee members:

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) analysis of SB 422 finds this proposal will positively impact people with disabilities and their families.

Many people with disabilities are non-drivers and as such do not have a Driver's License, but may have a State ID. This bill ensures a State ID is considered equivalent to a Driver's license for the purposes of DNR issued approvals. This commonsense correction is long overdue, and gives non-drivers the same access to opportunities as driver's license holders.

Non-drivers account for about thirty percent of Wisconsin's population, and include many older adults, people with disabilities, driving-age people who are unlicensed, do not own or have access to a vehicle, or prefer not to drive. The non-driver population is growing with more older adults giving up their driver's licenses and an increasing number of younger people remaining unlicensed longer. Nondrivers want and need access to state services and should have the ability to use a State ID to accomplish their business with the state.

BPDD encourages an audit of state statutes and state agency policies and procedures to ensure any state identification requirements consider State IDs and Drivers Licenses equivalent.

BPDD is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities¹.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Swedeen".

Beth Swedeen, Executive Director,
Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

¹ More about BPDD https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Legislative_Overview_BPDD.pdf.