



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

October 19, 2021

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues

Testimony on Senate Bills (SB) 610, 613, 615, 616 and 617

Good morning!

Thank you Chair Stafsholt and committee members for hearing the Sporting Freedom package of bills to preserve and enhance Wisconsin's sporting heritage for hunters and sportsmen and sportswomen.

As a lifelong hunter, I am proud to be the lead author of five of these proposals. My bills simplify turkey hunting regulations, seek to reduce the number of different types of hunting licenses offered in WI, share more information about public land access, clear obstacles for dog trainers and encourage partnerships for sport fish stocking in lakes and streams.

Turkey Hunting Simplification Bill (SB 610) – This bill would modify administrative rules relating to the hunting of wild turkeys to combine hunting zones and seasons to just two zones and two seasons (down from the complicated and restrictive six seasons that makes it difficult for many hunters to participate), and to modify youth hunting restrictions.

The spring turkey hunting season starts in mid-April, with the youth hunt on April 17th & 18th this year. On opening day of the regular season, April 21, 2021, there was a snow storm across portions of southern Wisconsin. The application for a turkey permit is due December 10 of the prior year. Unpredictable weather in April and May, can discourage youth hunters who have been looking forward to the hunt.

DNR Hunting License Categories Simplification Bill (SB 613) – This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies ways to consolidate or eliminate hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses to reduce the total number of types of licenses DNR is required to issue.

Currently there are over 20 categories of hunting and trapping license approvals, five special species stamps, and at least 12 different fishing licenses. Additionally, there are first time licenses for youth, disabled, spousal or mentored hunts. Hunters and anglers want to ethically participate in the sport, but could be left wondering if they have the proper license or tag for the season or the equipment that they are using?

DNR Public Lands Access Report Bill (SB 615) – This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies public access opportunities on all lands owned or managed by DNR, land

acquired under the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson stewardship program, and open managed forest lands.

Guidance from the legislature has been to increase access to lands funded by public dollars. Over the past decade additional emphasis included providing vehicular access on established roads. An aging hunting population often finds these roads gated and blocked providing inadequate access.

Dog Training Bill (SB 616) – This bill would require the DNR to make available on the Go Wild website dog training licenses. Currently, this license is not available there and that makes it harder for hunters to comply.

During the pandemic, many DNR Service Centers were closed, and counter service was restricted. This required hunters to mail a paper application for dog training licenses, allowing one to two weeks for processing. There is no justification for not making the application and permits available on the Go Wild system with all of the other hunting and fishing licenses.

Aquaculture Partnership Bill (SB 617) – This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a report that identifies opportunities for partnering with the private aquaculture industry for increased stocking of desirable sport fish in lakes and streams.

Public-private partnerships can take advantage of the aquaculture expertise that exists in Wisconsin. The successful Walleye Initiative can be used as a model to partner with private fish farms to stock popular game fish and increase angling opportunities and enhance native fish populations.

Thank you again to the chairman and committee for holding this hearing. This package of legislation is about simplifying the DNR rules and regulations, so whether you're a seasoned hunter, angler or new to the sport, you can be sure that you purchased the right licenses, permits or tags to be part of the sporting culture in Wisconsin.

The Sporting Freedom package of bills is very timely as hunters return to the fields, set-up their stands and harvest wild game all over Wisconsin. I am proud to be a part of this effort to protect and defend our sporting freedoms and heritage. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this legislation.



ALEX A. DALLMAN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 613

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues

October 19th, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Stafsholt and committee members, for allowing me to testify before you concerning Senate Bill 613 relating to a report on reducing the number of hunting, fishing, and trapping approvals required by DNR. I would also like to thank Senator Marklein for his leadership on this legislation.

This bill is part of the Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Act and would require the Department of Natural Resources to prepare a report that identifies ways to consolidate or eliminate hunting, fishing, and trapping approvals to reduce the total number of types of approvals DNR is required to issue. DNR must submit its report to the legislature no later than July 31, 2022.

I am happy to lead a bill that will increase transparency and access inside the DNR and will create an easier process for our sportsmen and women to navigate our hunting and fishing licensing. Currently, Wisconsin has 20 different hunting and trapping licenses and 12 different fishing licenses along with many sub categories of permits and stamps. We must do a better job to consolidate these licenses to create better access for both in-state and out-of-state sportsmen.

As a State, we have seen a decline in outdoor sporting recreation over the past several years. Just one of the underlying causes of this is the difficulty and fear that people have when it comes to the licensing process. Many people get bogged down and are afraid of breaking licensing laws because there are so many different options and convoluted requirements. A more streamlined process will encourage a new generation of sportsmen and women to participate while also welcoming hunter and angler tourists to Wisconsin each year.

Thank you again, Chairman Stafsholt, for the opportunity to testify before this committee today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, and Rural Issues

2021 Senate Bill 613

Streamlining Wisconsin's Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing Licensure System

October 19, 2021

Good morning Chair Stafsholt and members of the Committee. My name is Scott Loomans, policy specialist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 613 (SB 613), relating to a report on reducing the number of hunting, fishing, and trapping approvals required by the Department of Natural Resources.

As the department studies our selection of license products, we seek to simplify the licensure process for the customer, to increase customer satisfaction, and for department staff, to improve administrative efficiency.

The department sees opportunities to simplify, streamline, and consolidate the license types established by statute and sold by the department. For deer alone, there are 52 license types that authorize hunting. There are different licenses for each weapon type hunters can use. For each license type, there are offerings for people of different ages, status as a veteran or disabled veteran, state residency, completion of safety courses, novice hunters, new hunter recruiters, and combination license purchase options.

A 2020 report prepared by Legislative Council in consultation with the department and other stakeholders provides alternatives ranging from extensive revisions to the current licensing structure to more minor simplifications.

Simplification could be achieved in several areas:

- The licensing structure itself - simplifying by combining licenses and adjusting prices for revenue neutrality
- Applying a standard discount - there are currently 173 discounted products
- Making consistent the qualifying criteria for disabled veterans licenses
- Standardizing and simplifying preference point systems and randomized drawings
- Reviewing first time buyer and recruiter licenses

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.