CONCLUSIONS

1. **The crane population that visits Wisconsin is strong and growing quickly.** Sandhill cranes are large, territorial, adaptable birds that are increasingly comfortable in areas populated by humans.
2. **The crane population has already imposed significant agricultural producer costs and caused other public nuisance impacts which will continue to grow with the crane population**.
3. **While these migratory cranes are managed continentally by the federal government, the state can have a role to address damage caused by the cranes.** That role could include reimbursement to farmers for crane-caused damage (or mitigation steps) and/or establishing a hunting season for cranes.
4. **While estimates of crane-caused damage to crops are not entirely reliable, the WDNR and Fiscal Bureau places them between $1.6 million and $1.9 million.** Field crop damage is nearly evenly split between corn (52%) and potatoes (48%).
5. **The chemical repellent Anthroquinine is a (mostly) effective crane repellent for corn but no such treatment exists for potatoes.**
6. **The Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) is an existing and appropriate county-state partnership for evaluating wildlife damage claims and apportioning available funding.** WDACP funding is derived from surcharges to hunting licenses and by bonus antlerless deer permits. Under current law, WDACP does not address sandhill crane damages unless sandhill crane hunting is authorized.
7. **If sandhill cranes are added to the list of wildlife which are eligible for damage claims under the WDACP, the existing funding would likely become oversubscribed**. This would result in proportionally less funding per damage claim. The degree to which the fund is impacted depends on both the number of total claims and the magnitude of those claims which is currently unreliable.
8. **There is no research available that projects the ultimate population size of the EP of sandhill cranes that visit Wisconsin, meaning the future economic impact on farmers and nuisance levels are unknown and unbounded**.
    a. As one metric potentially bounding the challenge for only corn growers, there are 2.8 million acres of corn within ¾ of a mile of wetlands potentially used by sandhill cranes. Application at current rates for application of Anthroquinine would be between $32 - 48 million if the chemical was applied to every seed in those acres. Farmer funding of such an endeavor is unrealistic, so farmers take reasonable half-measures or leave the fields untreated.
    b. There is no similar metric for potatoes, which currently are 48% of reported crane damage.
9. **Unless controls are put in place, if damage levels are unbounded by crane population size, any state financial contributions to offset crane-caused damage would also be unbounded.** Those controls could be fiscal limits, or steps to limit the growth of the sandhill crane through hunting as a component of population control. Fiscal prudence suggests both.
10. **Research shows crane harvests can impact the crane's population size, depending on harvest levels and other factors.** Because of Wisconsin's central

breeding location, it is possible crane harvests in Wisconsin could have a greater population influence than harvests in other states, meaning greater ability to stabilize the population. But crane population harvest levels are not the purview of states--the USFWS manages those levels.

11. **The USFWS' adaptive harvest management approach to a Wisconsin sandhill crane hunt incorporates the lifecycle attributes of the sandhill crane and offers negligible risk to the health of Eastern Population while providing a stabilizing effect on its population**. The USFWS' six decades of migratory bird management includes hunting management and has yielded exemplary results for migratory bird populations, including the crane. Especially since the EP population is far in excess of management goals and continues to grow at a considerable rate.
12. **The timing of a Wisconsin sandhill crane hunt could impact the state's breeding population, depending on the goals of a hunt.** Timing a hunt between mid-October and Mid-November maximizes the likelihood of harvesting migratory or non-territorial birds, as opposed to Wisconsin breeding/territorial breeding cranes.
13. **The legislature must provide direction to the DNR to establish a sandhill crane hunting season together with the licensing parameters, limited draw permit approach, to impose a mandatory training requirement to comply with federal requirements, among other specific requirements.** That legislation should describe the legislative intention to generate additional revenue to both administer any possible hunt and provide additional funding to the WDACP. Further, legislation must address the questions posed by the DNR in responding to Chairman Tittl's questions.
14. **The risk of an authorized sandhill crane hunter misidentifying a whooping crane for a sandhill crane is small**. Identification training to distinguish between a sandhill and whooping crane is required of anyone obtaining a sandhill crane hunting tag. An ICF study acknowledges no legally authorized sandhill crane hunter has misidentified and shot a whooping crane.
15. **Wisconsin's Constitutional expectation that "[t]he people have the right to fish, hunt, trap, and take game subject only to reasonable restrictions as prescribed by law" (Article 1, Section 26)**
16. **Eco-tourism associated with cranes could be economically significant and is compatible with a crane hunting season.** Legislative intent communicated to the DNR should include the expectation to protect crane viewing associated with the substantial crane staging along the Wisconsin River. This can be done with a combination of geographical limitations as well as temporal restrictions.