



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 15, 2001

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #652

Car-Killed Deer (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife and Recreation)

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 475, #18]

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Natural Resources is responsible for contracting for the removal of car-killed deer from the roadside. Under statute, this appropriation is split funded by GPR and SEG from the fish and wildlife account of the conservation fund. The GPR appropriation was created in 1997; prior to that, transportation fund SEG had provided 50% of the funding. Base funding of \$629,200 annually is available for this purpose.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$32,500 SEG in 2001-02 and \$65,000 SEG in 2002-03 from the fish and wildlife account of the conservation fund for the costs of contracting for the removal of car-killed deer.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Contracts for removal of car-killed deer are managed at the county level. Some contracts provide a flat fee per year for deer-removal services, others reimburse on a per-carcass basis. Contracting for removal at a flat fee carries the benefit of predictable annual costs; however, it provides little leverage against contractors who may not perform as efficiently as desired. Reimbursing contractors on a per-deer basis ensures that deer will be disposed of, but it is more difficult to budget the annual contract costs. Motorists involved in collisions with deer may also request a free permit from law enforcement officials, enabling them to keep the deer. Since 1995, the percentage of car-killed deer removed by motorists with free permits has declined from 42% to 28%.

2. Under the bill car-killed deer removal is funded at \$314,600 GPR and \$347,100 SEG in 2001-02 and \$314,600 GPR and \$379,600 SEG in 2002-03. However, the statutes specify that each appropriation is to "pay 50% of the costs of the removal and disposal of car-killed deer from the highways". Therefore, any SEG appropriations not matched by GPR would lapse to the conservation fund at the end of each fiscal year.

3. Prior to 1997, funding for the removal of car-killed deer from the roadside was split evenly between transportation fund SEG and fish and wildlife account SEG. This 50/50 split was instituted in part to recognize that car-killed deer removal from Wisconsin highways has both a highway maintenance and a wildlife management component. The state's large deer herd combined with increasing use of state roads has resulted in increased insurance costs, significant property damage and safety concerns from car-deer collisions. In order to address funding concerns in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the 1997-99 biennial budget act converted to GPR most appropriations from the segregated transportation fund (revenues derived primarily from the state motor fuel tax and motor vehicle registrations) that were made to agencies other than DOT (including the DNR car-killed deer appropriation, nonpoint account automobile title transfer fee revenues and the maintenance of state park and forest roads).

4. The funding provided in the bill would provide for an approximately 5% annual increase in deer removal costs. However, as shown in the following table, over the past three years contract costs have increased by an average of 10% annually. The "other" category refers to removal efforts by DNR staff statewide; currently, these efforts are not being tracked by law enforcement staff. Contract costs exceeded DNR expenditure authority in 1996 (by \$6,400), 1997 (by \$17,900), and in 2000 (by \$5,300). In these cases, DNR used additional funds from the warden's supplies allocation of the fish and wildlife account to cover the cost of contracting for deer removal.

Car-Killed Deer Removal

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Total Car-Killed Deer</u>	<u>Free Permits</u>	<u>Contractor Pickup</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Costs</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1995	46,443	19,730	26,488	225	\$343,910	
1996	46,395	17,095	29,075	225	391,439	13.8%
1997	44,210	16,001	28,018	191	437,938	11.9
1998	41,829	13,923	27,906	0	462,867	5.7
1999	44,897	13,419	31,478	0	510,875	10.4
2000	47,555	13,130	34,425	0	577,322	13.0

5. The Committee could consider several alternatives. The 50% statutory limit on state conservation fund expenditures could be removed allowing the expenditure of the amount appropriated in the bill. If no additional funds were provided, DNR would likely have to pay cost-overruns from warden supplies funding. Alternatively, DNR wardens, municipal highway maintenance or local law enforcement officials could be called upon to remove the deer, or the deer

could potentially be left uncollected. To fully fund deer removal contracts (assuming a cost increase of 10% annually), an additional \$32,500 would be required in 2001-02 and \$65,000 in 2002-03 over what is provided under the bill. The 50% fish and wildlife limit could be retained and matching funds of \$32,500 in 2001-02 and \$65,000 in 2002-03 could be provided either from GPR (as under current law) or from transportation fund SEG. In addition other funding sources could be considered. Forest acreage and forest habitat in the state have been increasing and may have some effect on both deer populations and the likelihood of collisions with vehicles. Therefore, the forestry account of the conservation fund may be an appropriate source of funding for a portion of car-killed deer costs. Further, areas of production agriculture may also attract deer and other wildlife and increase the carrying capacity of the surrounding habitat. Therefore, the agricultural chemical management fund (pesticide and fertilizer product and licensing fees) may be viewed by some as an appropriate source of revenue to pay a portion of car-killed deer costs.

ALTERNATIVES TO BASE

1. Approve the Governor’s recommendation to provide an additional \$32,500 SEG in 2001-02 and \$65,000 SEG in 2002-03 from the fish and wildlife account of the conservation fund for the costs of contracting for the removal of car-killed deer. In addition, delete the requirement that funding be split evenly between the SEG and GPR appropriations. This would fund an increase in costs of 5% annually.

Alternative 1	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$97,000
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>[\$0]</i>

2. Approve the Governor’s recommendation to provide an additional \$32,500 SEG in 2001-02 and \$65,000 SEG in 2002-03 from the fish and wildlife account. Further, provide \$32,500 GPR in 2001-02 and \$65,000 GPR in 2002-03 to satisfy the statutorily required 50% match. This would fund an increase in costs of 10% annually.

Alternative 2	GPR	SEG	TOTAL
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$97,500	\$97,500	\$195,000
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$97,500</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$97,500]</i>

3. Approve the Governor’s recommendation. In addition, modify the statutory requirement that the car killed deer appropriation be split funded evenly from fish and wildlife SEG and GPR to instead require that the appropriation be funded 50% from fish and wildlife account SEG, and 50% from some combination of GPR and one of the following and provide \$32,500 in 2001-02 and \$65,000 from one of the following sources:

- a. Transportation fund SEG

- b. Forestry account SEG
- c. Agricultural chemical management fund SEG

Alternative 3	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$195,000
<i>[Change to Bill</i>	<i>\$97,500]</i>

4. Maintain current law (DNR would need to fund increased costs from base resources or, potentially, shift the costs to local officials).

Alternative 4	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$0
<i>[Change to Bill</i>	<i>- \$97,500]</i>

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