



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #1203

Funding for Act 16 Vetoed Provisions Within the Conservation Fund (DNR)

CURRENT LAW

As part of his partial vetoes in 2001 Act 16 (the 2001-03 biennial budget), the Governor deleted three legislative earmarks affecting appropriations from the conservation fund. However, increased funding levels related to those earmarks were not deleted from the corresponding appropriations.

GOVERNOR

No provision.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. One vetoed provision would have required DNR to provide \$300,000 SEG from the forestry account of the conservation fund to the Great Lakes Forestry Museum to develop a facility in Rice Lake. Although this earmark was vetoed by the Governor, the \$300,000 appropriation in 2001-02 remains in Act 16 in the continuing appropriation for aids to certain non-profit conservation organizations, including Gathering Waters and the Natural Resources Foundation. The grant to the Natural Resources Foundation is statutorily limited to \$85,000 annually. The Gathering Waters grant is not limited by statute (\$150,000 annually has been provided in the past). The Department has indicated that it does not intend to increase the size of the grants provided to these organizations at this time, and anticipates that the funds would remain in the continuing balance of the account unspent. Deleting \$300,000 in 2001-02 would reflect the Governor's veto and make the funds available for other forestry purposes.

2. Another vetoed provision would have required DNR to provide \$80,000 SEG to the

Village of Whiting in Portage County for the construction of a handicapped-accessible recreational pier on the Plover River and \$50,000 SEG to the Wausau Kayak/Canoe Corporation, a non-profit organization, to upgrade the whitewater course on the Wisconsin River in Wausau. Both designations were funded by increasing an appropriation from the water resources account of the conservation fund for recreational boating projects. Without these earmarks, DNR has the ability to increase expenditures associated with recreational boating project aids by \$130,000 in 2001-02. Officials with the Waterways Commission indicate these funds would be used to increase recreational boating expenditures if not removed. The recreational boating project aids program is funded by a continuing appropriation at almost \$4.9 million in 2001-02 and \$4.5 million in 2002-03. It may be argued that as the funding was not made available under Act 16 for the purpose intended by the Legislature that it would be reasonable to delete the associated funds. This would allow the funds to be used for future water resources account purposes.

3. It should be noted that each of these appropriations was funded in the first year of the biennium only, so deleting these funds would not affect the base budget for the 2003-05 biennium.

ALTERNATIVES TO BILL

1. Delete the following amounts in 2001-02:

a. \$300,000 in forestry account SEG associated with the Great Lakes Forestry Museum veto.

Alternative 1a	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING	- \$300,000

b. \$130,000 in water resources account SEG associated with the Village of Whiting recreational pier veto (\$80,000) and the Wausau whitewater course veto (\$50,000).

Alternative 1b	SEG
2001-03 FUNDING	- \$130,000

2. Maintain current law.

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