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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #450

Position Reductions (DNR -- Departmentwide)

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 298, #2 (part)]

CURRENT LAW

Currently, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is authorized 2,642 positions. DNR staff manage fish, wildlife, forests, parks and other outdoor recreational activities, as well as for land, air, and water resources in accordance with the Department's mission to work with the citizens and businesses of Wisconsin while preserving and enhancing the natural resources of Wisconsin.

GOVERNOR

Delete \$2,735,400 annually (\$1,062,500 FED, \$103,800 PR, and \$1,569,100 SEG) and 29.40 positions as shown in the following table related to reductions for natural resources educators and science services functions. [The 36.69 position reduction related to vacant positions is not addressed in this paper].

Educator and Science Services Position Reductions -- Governor

| <u>Program</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>FTE</u> | <u>Annual Reduction</u> | <u>Fund Source</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Educators: | | | | |
| Fisheries Management | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | -0.75 | -\$63,400 | FED |
| Communication and Education | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | -1.00 | -85,100 | FED |
| | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | -3.00 | -220,000 | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Fisheries Management | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | -0.25 | -21,200 | Fish and Wildlife SEG |
| Parks | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced/Senior | -3.00 | -242,700 | Parks SEG |
| Southern Forests | Natural Resources Educator - Senior | -1.00 | -80,700 | Forestry SEG |
| Natural Resources Magazine | Natural Resources Program Specialist | -1.00 | -81,700 | Natural Resources Magazine SEG |
| Waste Management | Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | <u>-1.00</u> | <u>-79,400</u> | Environmental Management SEG |
| Subtotal | | -11.00 | -874,200 | |
| Science Services: | | | | |
| | Natural Resources Scientist - Advanced/Senior | -9.25 | -914,000 | FED |
| | Chemist- Advanced/Senior | -1.25 | -103,800 | PR |
| | Natural Resources Research Scientist - Advanced/Senior | -7.40 | -793,000 | Conservation Fund SEG |
| | Natural Resources Research Scientist - Advanced | <u>-0.50</u> | <u>-50,400</u> | Nonpoint SEG |
| Subtotal | | -18.40 | -1,861,200 | |
| Total | | -29.40 | -2,735,400 | |

DISCUSSION POINTS

Historical DNR Position Levels

1. Table 1 shows the adjusted base position authority, by fund source, for the second (odd-numbered) fiscal year of each of the last five biennia and under the bill. The Department had just over 3,000 authorized positions in fiscal year 2000-01, with authorized staff levels generally declining since that time. It should be noted that although 2014-15 overall DNR staffing levels declined by approximately 17 from two years earlier, this figure includes an increase of 23.3 DNR staff as a result of the transfer of the petroleum environmental cleanup fund award (PECFA) program from the Department of Safety and Professional Services to DNR in the 2013-15 budget act. That is, without this agency-to-agency PECFA transfer, which has no overall affect on state staffing levels, DNR staff would have declined by approximately 40 positions.

TABLE 1

DNR Base-Level Position Authority

| | <u>2006-07</u> | <u>2008-09</u> | <u>2010-11</u> | <u>2012-13</u> | <u>2014-15</u> | <u>Governor 2016-17</u> |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| GPR | 296.85 | 296.85 | 300.69 | 291.10 | 277.20 | 231.52 |
| SEG | 1,687.34 | 1,699.19 | 1,651.97 | 1,614.01 | 1,623.11 | 1,618.95 |
| PR | 261.64 | 267.14 | 267.14 | 260.14 | 247.14 | 244.64 |
| FED | <u>471.35</u> | <u>482.35</u> | <u>489.42</u> | <u>493.69</u> | <u>494.59</u> | <u>479.84</u> |
| Total | 2,717.18 | 2,745.53 | 2,709.22 | 2,658.94 | 2,642.04 | 2,574.95 |

2. Table 2 shows the number of authorized adjusted base positions in DNR by division for 2014-15, the number of positions reduced under bill, the number of positions transferred in from other agencies under the bill, and the total authorized positions under the bill in 2016-17.

TABLE 2

Department of Natural Resources Positions

| <u>Division</u> | 2014-15 <u>Adjusted Base</u> | <u>Governor Reductions</u> | <u>Percent Reduction</u> | <u>Governor Transfers-In</u> | 2016-17 <u>Governor Authorized</u> |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Land and Forestry | 949.83 | -26.50 | -2.79% | 4.0 | 927.33 |
| Air and Waste | 330.70 | -5.50 | -1.66 | 0.0 | 325.20 |
| Enforcement and Science | 288.48 | -19.90 | -6.90 | 0.0 | 268.58 |
| Water | 658.93 | -10.19 | -1.55 | 9.0 | 657.74 |
| Administration and Technology | 207.80 | -2.00 | -0.96 | 0.0 | 205.80 |
| Customer Assistance and Employee Services | <u>206.30</u> | <u>-16.00</u> | -7.76 | <u>0.0</u> | <u>190.30</u> |
| Total | 2,642.04 | -80.09 | -3.03% | 13.0 | 2,574.95 |

3. The bill would delete approximately 80, or 3%, of currently authorized DNR positions. The total 80.09 positions deleted under the bill reflects the following provisions: (a) 66.09 positions deleted under the agency-wide reduction including 11.0 natural resources educators, 18.40 science services, and 36.69 positions identified as vacant; (b) 9.0 positions deleted under a provision intended to consolidate various functions related to marketing in the Department of Tourism; (c) 4.0 positions deleted related to a provision regarding cutting notices on private forest land; and (d) 1.0 position deleted under a provision related to technology and procurement services being transferred to the Department of Administration (DOA). The total 13.0 positions added under the bill include the following: (a) 4.0 positions added related to the attachment of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve Management Board to the Department of Natural Resources; and (b) 9.0 positions related to the transfer of private onsite wastewater treatment system regulation from the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) to DNR. Both these transfers were reversed by prior Joint Committee on Finance action.

Educators

4. Attachment 1 shows authorized natural resources educator positions in DNR and the number of positions eliminated under the bill by funding source. There are currently 18 authorized base-level educator positions, including 2.0 vacancies. The bill would delete 1.0 natural resource magazine specialist and 11.0 educator positions (including 10.0 in this provision and 1.0 in the consolidation of Tourism marketing services item which is addressed in a separate budget paper), leaving 7.0 educator positions authorized.

5. Attachment 2 provides a list of each educator position by program. The bill would eliminate 11 (61%) of the 18 educator positions. As shown in the attachment, there are currently

three natural resources educators in the Bureau of Communication and Education including two federally funded public affairs managers. The south central public affairs manager is responsible for coordinating communications regarding a variety of topics such as the Sauk Prairie Recreational Area, Columbia County Shooting Range, and Mazomanie Beach, while the law enforcement public affairs manager is responsible for coordinating communications regarding warden recruitment, marketing, and training, outreach and promotions, including the law enforcement newsletter, and a number of hunter education and recreational safety programs. For example, the position performs outreach for the Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) program, a weekly summer camp in East Troy, for children who have lost a law enforcement parent in the line of duty, which Department wardens volunteer to staff. A third natural resources educator is responsible for coordinating the Department's Water Education for Teachers (WET) and Project Wild programs. The programs involve a series of workshops throughout the state conducted by local facilitators who provide training on water and wildlife curriculum and activity guides for children in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade covering topics such as the role of water in the human body, water quality, and waste water management, terrestrial wildlife, wildlife habitat, and responsible human actions. The educator also coordinates programming at the Mackenzie Environmental Education Center (MEEC) in Poynette, in Columbia County.

6. As shown in the attachments, there are currently 6.0 state parks educators and 2.0 southern forests educators. These educators are responsible for coordinating and conducting state parks interpretive programming and are sometimes referred to as naturalists. Educational programming may also be conducted by limited-term employees and volunteers from state property friends groups or other non-profit conservation organizations with oversight, mentoring and training provided by DNR staff. Educators/naturalists provide programming to the approximately 15.3 million visitors per year to Wisconsin parks and southern forests. Programming includes, but is not limited to guided hikes, evening talks, outdoor skills programs such as archery, fishing, outdoor cooking, and geocaching, and school and youth group programs. In 2013, for example, park staff presented programs for more than 12,000 school children and their teachers. In addition to providing naturalist programs, educators serve as on-property experts on invasive species, helping to create management plans and leading volunteer eradication efforts. They also work closely with property volunteers including friends groups that work to support the properties' interpretive programming through fundraising and volunteerism.

7. Interpretive programming may vary depending on the types of features of the particular property. For example, Interstate State Park features the Ice Age Interpretive Center. The Center provides Ice Age exhibits about the glacial history of Wisconsin and during the summer, the Center offers educational programs including guided hikes, and historical programs such as a program discussing the history of the St. Croix River Valley. Recent outdoor nature programs and events at state park and forest properties included: (1) the Knee-high Naturalist program at Richard Bong State Recreation Area, a nature study program for three to five-year-olds; (2) a program about the wetlands of Wisconsin (conducted by staff from the Wisconsin Wetland Association); (3) a children's musical program about ducks at the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit; and (4) a Garlic Mustard Blitz at Devil's Lake State Park, a volunteer effort to remove garlic mustard and invasive plant from the park.

8. The administration argues that the natural resources educator positions no longer serve the core mission of the agency and should be deleted [Alternative A1]. However, others argue that the natural resources educators serve the Department's mission of working with the citizens of the state while preserving and enhancing the natural resources of Wisconsin. Providing educational resources may enhance the visitor experience, and the programming may increase tourism and the number of visitors to state properties, providing an economic benefit to the state. Further, the educational and outreach services provided by some of the educators promote safe and responsible enjoyment of outdoor recreational activities, such as hunting, angling, and motorized recreation. The segregated accounts which provide funding for the natural resources educator positions deleted under the bill would have sufficient balances on June 30, 2017, to support restoring the positions and funding, although some accounts may have a structural imbalance going into the 2017-19 biennium. Alternative A5 would restore the positions.

9. While DNR would be required to delete the funding and number of positions from the identified appropriations included in the bill, according to the Department, the final result of the potential position cuts will be determined by the outcome of the budget. However, the Department notes that this does not mean these staff will be eliminated and that some personnel may have the right to "bump" to another position within the agency.

10. If the Committee wished to restore some natural resources educator positions, an option would be to restore the 1.75 federally-funded positions. One federally-funded educator is located at Chippewa Moraine State Park. Another educator, funded from federal funding (75%) and fish and wildlife account SEG (25%) is currently responsible for angler education. This includes working with partners to facilitate after-school and youth fishing programs and providing materials and gear to fishing clubs, civic organizations, and local parks and recreational departments. As the 0.25 position funded from fish and wildlife SEG is used to match federal funding, this could be restored in order to fully support the angler educator position [Alternative A2].

11. Another option would be to restore the 9.0 filled positions, while deleting the 2.0 vacant positions [Alternative A3].

12. In addition to the educators, the bill would delete \$81,700 and 1.0 Natural Resources Program Specialist (whose duties include natural resource magazine business management). As this position is not classified as an educator it is not shown in the attachments. The Committee could consider restoring the position [Alternative A4, but also included in A3 or A5]. The statutes authorize the Department to issue and distribute magazines containing information on resource management and related subjects. The direct costs of the agency's bi-monthly publication, *Wisconsin Natural Resources*, are entirely funded from subscription, single copy, and insert sales. The magazine carries no advertisements. Account revenues currently support 3.0 positions within the agency's Office of Communication, who are responsible for producing the magazine, as well as the costs of printing and distribution of *Wisconsin Natural Resources*. (2013 Act 20 deleted a vacant 0.5 position.) While the bill would reduce current staffing levels by one-third, DNR indicates they would continue to publish six issues of the magazine per year at least in the near-term. They indicate the Department is obligated to produce the six issues per year current subscribers agreed to (subscriptions can be for up to three, or more, years). However, the size, content or quality of the

magazine could change. For example, the magazine may need to rely more heavily on contributed content and services. If revenues were sufficient, the Department could hire additional limited-term employees to perform magazine work.

Science Services

13. Attachment 3 shows authorized positions in the Bureau of Science Services under current law and the bill. There are 57.40 authorized base-level positions in the Bureau of Science Services. However, the attachment shows 58.40 authorized positions, which includes 1.0 position which would be transferred from the human resources subprogram to science services under the bill. As shown in the attachment, there are currently 6.4 vacancies (all for less than 12 months) in the Bureau of Science Services. The bill would delete 18.4 positions (approximately 32%), leaving 40.0 positions authorized.

14. Current staff include 1.0 four-year natural resources research scientist project position (funded from the water resources account of the conservation fund) created in 2013 Act 20 for development of a remote sensing program to measure lake water quality, in-lake vegetation, and riparian development. Remote sensing primarily involves the use of satellites to relay water quality data. In addition, 2013 Act 20 provided 1.5 federally funded research-scientist positions. This included 1.0 research scientist-advanced position to annually conduct regional workshops and develop training materials for citizen volunteers as part of a statewide trail camera monitoring project to provide predator information, as well as a measure of fawn recruitment rates, estimates of buck densities, and age structure. 2013 Act 20 also provided 0.5 federally-funded research scientist-advanced position to develop human dimensions (public opinion) research and conduct outreach at the local level to gather input for setting goals and implementing strategies for managing the deer population.

15. Currently, the Bureau of Science Services is organized into five sections as shown in Attachment 4. Three of the sections provide research functions: (a) fisheries and aquatic sciences research; (b) wildlife and forestry research; and (c) social sciences research. In addition, there are two sections which do not directly provide research functions: (a) environmental science services (laboratory certification, operator certification, laboratory services); and management and technology services (environmental fees, toxics release inventory, departmentwide information systems integration, budget, financial, and information technology support for the Office of Business Support and Science).

16. According to the Department, the Bureau of Science Services consists of researchers, analysts and other individuals who provide the expertise and foundation of all science-based decision-making of DNR. The Department states that "the methods the DNR uses to manage wildlife and handle other environmental issues is built upon the research completed by this bureau." Currently, the Department develops a biennial research agenda. The Bureau of Science Services is responsible for the centralized coordination of all Department research activities. The term "research" is defined by the Department's manual code, which outlines the process for developing the biennial research agenda, as "those activities that apply the scientific method and principals of experimental design to produce information, develop technologies and support the application of science." The code states that, "the aims of research include: (1) the discovery and sound

interpretation of new facts and relationships; (2) the synthesis of existing information, analysis of emerging concepts, and revision of accepted conclusions; and (3) the practical application of these new or revised conclusions to guide Department programs." In addition, research activities may include both experimental and non-experimental and quantitative and qualitative approaches.

17. Under current practice, the biennial research agenda is developed by a research review team convened by the Science Services Bureau Director, who serves as team leader. The team consists of the deputy division administrators from the Divisions of Air and Waste, Forestry, Land, and Water. Other Science Services management staff also assist the research team in reviewing and evaluating priorities across programs. Initially, Science Services management staff meet with program staff and managers to review and discuss ongoing research related to each program, current staff and funding, anticipated resources available for new projects, and potential research priorities and future directions (by the end of October of even-numbered years). Each Division then develops a prioritized list of research needs for their programs and provides it to Science Services management who consolidates the identified priorities, and consults with the Secretary's office to identify departmentwide policy priorities and emerging issues (by January 15 of odd-numbered years). Science Services management then compiles a draft biennial research agenda and presents it to the research review team for review, discussion and recommendations for prioritizing research across programs (by January 31). The research review team makes recommendations to Science Services management (by February 15). Science Services management then revises the research agenda in accordance with the research review team's recommendations and submits the revised biennial research agenda to the Secretary's office (by March 1). The Secretary reviews the revised agenda and provides approval (generally by March 15). The Science Services Bureau Director then distributes the final biennial research agenda to the research review team, and other DNR management staff who distribute it among their staff.

18. The biennial research agenda is typically presented to the Natural Resources Board as an informational item (no action required) at a spring board meeting. As of May, 2015, the Department indicates that the 2015-17 biennial research agenda is still in draft form and will be presented to the Board after receiving approval from the Secretary. In May, 2013, the 2013-15 agenda was presented to the Board. The 2013-15 Biennial Research Agenda states that "natural resources managers rely on researchers for information on effective management techniques, sustainable harvest regulations, successful habitat protection, and much more". According to the agenda, a biennial research agenda contributes to making natural resources management decisions based on sound science in the following ways: conducting applied research and acquiring original knowledge; analyzing new information and emerging technologies; synthesizing information for policy and management decisions; applying the scientific method to the solution of environmental and natural resource problems; providing science-based support services for management programs departmentwide; and collaborating with agencies and academic institutions in Wisconsin and globally.

19. The biennial research agenda has typically been divided into seven "research themes" including research to: (1) manage and sustain ecosystems; (2) manage and sustain populations; (3) address pollutants/stressors and protect human health; (4) support adaptation to change; (5) understand social and economic values; (6) improve assessment, monitoring, and modeling; and (6)

ensure a solid science foundation. Under each research theme, "priority research focus areas" are identified which provide a snapshot of research already being conducted and help prioritize future research investments. According to the Department, the biennial research agenda is designed to identify DNR programs' priority research needs. Once a research need is identified, the best means of addressing that need is determined and developed in collaboration with the program requesting the research. DNR staff note that this may take the form of a research project, but may also take the form of a scientific literature review, a technical consulting team, or other type of project.

20. The Bureau's three research sections support research for the Department and in collaboration with the Department's partners (such as the University of Wisconsin and UW-Extension, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, and other states). The fisheries and aquatic sciences research section and the wildlife and forestry research section prepare biennial reports of research conducted. During fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14, the fisheries and aquatic sciences research section conducted 63 research projects covering 17 priority focus areas under five of the major research themes as shown in the following table.

TABLE 3

Fish and Aquatic Sciences Research Projects 2012-13 and 2013-14

| <u>Project Theme</u> | <u>Priority Focus Area</u> | <u># of Projects</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Manage and Sustain Ecosystems | Landscape Dynamics | 1 |
| | Invasive Species | 7 |
| | Great Lakes | 4 |
| | Groundwater, drinking water, and water use | 1 |
| | Inland lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands | 2 |
| | Dam removal and fish passage | 3 |
| | Sustainable fisheries | 17 |
| | Nongame Species | 2 |
| | Fish, wildlife, and plant genetics | 1 |
| Pollutants and Human Health | Nutrient impacts to surface and groundwater | 4 |
| | Mining Impacts | 1 |
| | Harmful blue-green algae | 1 |
| | Fish and wildlife contaminants | 1 |
| | Biological criteria and designated uses | 4 |
| | Baseline assessment and monitoring | 6 |
| Social and Economic Values | Customer Satisfaction and Behavior | 1 |
| Ensure Solid Science Foundation | Long-term monitoring and foundational science | <u>7</u> |
| Total | | 63 |

21. As shown in Table 3, during fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14, the fisheries and aquatic sciences research section conducted 17 research projects related to "sustainable fisheries within the project theme of "manage and sustain ecosystems". For example, staff conducted a

project to develop better documentation of age and growth characteristics in muskellunge fisheries, with an objective of setting realistic goals based on limnology, fish community, and angling pressure. Another project investigated the long-term viability of wild brook trout and brown trout populations as source populations for Wisconsin's wild trout stocking program. The fisheries and aquatic sciences research section also conducted seven research projects related to invasive species such as a statewide evaluation of early season whole-lake and small-scale herbicide applications for determining effective management protocols for control of specific invasive plants (Eurasian water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed) in lakes. This project was requested by the DNR Bureau of Water Quality and involved conducting water monitoring on herbicide applications in Wisconsin lakes and flowages in order to provide information regarding herbicide concentration and exposure time data.

22. During fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14, the wildlife and forestry research section conducted 46 research projects spanning 23 priority focus areas as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Wildlife and Forestry Research Projects 2012-13 and 2013-14

| <u>Project Theme</u> | <u>Priority Focus Area</u> | <u># of Projects</u> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Manage and Sustain Ecosystems | Landscape Dynamics | 1 |
| | Restoration Ecology | 1 |
| | Driftless Area | 3 |
| | Grassland Landscapes | 1 |
| | Forest Trees | 5 |
| | White-Tailed Deer | 1 |
| | Upland Game Species | 3 |
| | Carnivores | 1 |
| | Nongame Species | 2 |
| | Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Genetics | 5 |
| | Fire Suppression and Fire Management | 1 |
| | Pollutants and Human Health | Fish and Wildlife Contaminants |
| Support Adaptation to Change | Forest and Forestry Impacts | 1 |
| | Fisheries and Wildlife Impacts | 2 |
| Social and Economic Values | Resource Valuation and Ecosystem Services | 1 |
| | Policy and Planning Process | 1 |
| | Stakeholder Awareness and Knowledge | 1 |
| | Fire Suppression and Management | 1 |
| Assessment, Monitoring, Modeling | Furberar Population Monitoring | 1 |
| | Baseline Assessment and Monitoring | 2 |
| | White-Tailed Deer Population Monitoring | 6 |
| | Waterfowl | 1 |
| Ensure Solid Science Foundation | Long-term Monitoring and Foundational Science | 2 |
| | Emerging Issues | <u>2</u> |
| Total | | 46 |

23. As shown in Table 4, six projects included the priority focus area of "whitetail deer population monitoring" within the project theme of "assessment, monitoring, and modeling" including a project to determine survival rates of white-tailed deer fawns and causes of mortality in northern and east-central Wisconsin. The research projects also included five projects related to forest trees, including an ongoing study to investigate a variety of silvicultural (forest management) techniques designed to increase old-growth characteristics. The study involves a partnership between DNR, UW-Madison, and the U.S. Forest Service.

24. The social sciences research section does not prepare a biennial report. According to the Department, some of the most challenging decisions in natural resources management stem from the relationship between people and the environment. As such, public attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs strongly influence management decision-making. Staff in the social sciences research section assist DNR programs in understanding diverse stakeholder opinions and evaluating satisfaction levels. Their consultation and research supports program reviews and planning efforts. These staff conduct stakeholder analysis, personal interviewing, demographic analysis, focus groups, and mail, telephone, and internet surveys. They also provide consultation on how to analyze and report the results of such efforts. Finally, they review and approve all surveys conducted by or contracted for Department programs.

25. Recent social sciences research projects included an analysis of surveys of conservation patron license holders (surveys conducted in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2010, and 2012), with data analysis completed in 2014. The conservation patron license provides the holder with a number of hunting, fishing and other recreational privileges and a subscription to *Wisconsin Natural Resources* magazine. According to the Department, understanding conservation patron activity use over time can provide insights into the degree to which the current package of privileges meets the patron's needs. Further, documenting the activity use by patron license holders is utilized to allocate patron revenues to agency program areas and understand changes in recreational demand. The analysis found that the number of patron license holders who participated in some form of hunting and fishing over the time-period was relatively stable, and that the frequency of trapping participation is much lower relative to participation in hunting and fishing, but showed a modest increase in trapping participation over time. Also in 2014, the social sciences section conducted surveys and evaluations of several programs including the Department's "Hunting for Sustainability" program (for the Bureau of Wildlife Management and the Bureau of Law Enforcement), which targeted novice hunters and provided multiple training sessions, and the Wingshooting for Migratory Birds program, an outdoor skills educational program for experienced shooters to refine their wingshooting skills (for the Bureau of Wildlife Management). The section is currently finalizing a report on a study regarding public attitudes toward wolves and wolf management in Wisconsin, which included a statewide survey. The section is also conducting a statewide creel survey of Wisconsin anglers to learn about angler experiences and provide information on what type of fish anglers are catching, how many fish are kept, and where anglers are fishing (for the Bureau of Fisheries Management).

26. As noted, the bill would delete 18.4 science services positions, leaving 40.0 positions authorized in the Bureau of Science Services. At-risk notices have been delivered to 30 people in the Bureau of Science Services. However, DNR notes that Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) rules require the Department to notify all persons within a given classification that their

employment is "at-risk" even if not all of these people will be impacted by position reductions. When asked to provide additional information regarding the at-risk notifications, the Department stated that they were told by OSER that the at-risk information is not a public record and will be made available when the Department submits their June 1 layoff plan to OSER. The Department has repeatedly stated that the outcome of the budget will inform their options as to which particular staff are laid off.

27. As shown in the attachments, of the 27 currently authorized natural resources research scientist positions, 16 are federally funded from two sources, the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act, and the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. The bill would delete 9.25 federally-funded research scientist positions. The Pittman-Robertson Act provides federal grant funds (from taxes on sporting arms and ammunition) to fish and wildlife agencies in states, the District of Columbia, and other U.S. territories with legislation in effect which restricts the use of revenue from license fees for use only by a fish and wildlife agency. Wisconsin's share of the federal fiscal year 2013-14 Pittman Robertson apportionment was \$23.4 million (approximately 3.1% of the nationwide total of \$761 million), and is expected to receive approximately \$27.6 million in federal fiscal year 2014-15 (3.1% of the total \$886 million estimate). The federal sport fish restoration (SFR) program provides grant funds (from taxes on fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels) to the states' fish and wildlife agencies (Wisconsin received approximately \$10.8 million in federal fiscal year 2013-14 and expects to receive approximately \$12 million in federal fiscal year 2014-15) for fishery projects, motorboat access and aquatic education based on a formula which primarily includes land area and number of paid license holders. Federal Pittman-Robertson and SFR funds are provided for up to 75% of eligible projects, with the states providing a 25% match. In Wisconsin, funds from the fish and wildlife account are primarily used to provide the matching funds.

28. While the bill would delete 9.25 federally funded research scientist positions, DNR indicates that this would not reduce the amount of federal Pittman-Robertson and SFR funds the Department would expect to receive. The Department indicates they would utilize the funding for other eligible Pittman-Robertson and SFR activities. DNR has until the end of the following federal fiscal year to obligate Pittman-Robertson funds and SFR funds to specific projects under DNR's comprehensive management system (CMS) grant proposal and development grant segments (for example, until September 30, 2016, for federal fiscal year 2014-15 funds). Funds not obligated by that time may revert to the USFWS. However, USFWS may determine that if a state obligates a sufficient amount of their apportionment every year, the funds would not revert. DNR staff indicate they are not aware of any Wisconsin funds being reverted. The CMS narrative covers a period of seven years but is updated annually. Each spring, the annual CMS and development grant proposals are sent to the DNR Secretary for review and approval. DNR also submits a form to DOA for receipt of that year's allocation (with detail on which federal appropriations the funding authority should be allocated to, as well as detail on the required state match amounts and corresponding appropriation detail). The Department could update the grant narratives to reflect the shift from funding the science services research positions to another eligible activity. It should also be noted that even if the positions are deleted in the bill, the Department could submit a request to DOA to restore these positions if sufficient funding were available. If the Committee wished to ensure that the positions remain dedicated to scientific research, an alternative could be to restore the federal positions [Alternative B2].

29. Some have argued that the Department should not focus on controversial science projects, such as regarding the study of climate change or mining impacts, and that DNR science services staff have not always utilized appropriate scientific methods (including for some wildlife management projects). Further, some argue that the research has increased the controversy around a number of natural resource issues. Others have argued it is appropriate for DNR to engage in research related to natural resource impacts, including climate change and that management of natural resources should take into account the effect of rising temperatures on plant and animal populations and the environment. Of the 96,200 hours worked by Bureau of Science Services staff in fiscal year 2013-14, 2,800 hours were logged on activities related to climate change.

30. The administration indicates that the science services positions no longer serve the core mission of the agency and should be deleted [Alternative B1]. Further, it is sometimes argued that scientific research could be more appropriately conducted by the program bureaus (such as fisheries management) rather than an independent bureau. The Department's stated mission is to protect and enhance our natural resources, our air, land and water; protect our wildlife, fish and forests, and the ecosystems that sustain all life; provide a healthy sustainable environment and a full range of outdoor opportunities; ensure the right of all people to use and enjoy these resources in their work and leisure; work with people to understand each other's views and to carry out the public will; and in this partnership consider the future and generations to follow. The Department's 2013-15 biennial research agenda notes research conducted by the Bureau is utilized to establish sustainable harvest seasons and implement successful habitat protection efforts. For example, work conducted by the Bureau includes routine monitoring and data collection such as waterway surveys to collect long-term data on such items as water quality, fish populations, and aquatic invasive species, which supports the Department's mission to protect and enhance natural resources and provide a healthy sustainable environment and range of outdoor opportunities. Further, it is argued that social sciences research assists the Department in supporting the mission of understanding the views of the public and carrying out the public will.

31. In the biennial reports covering fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Department notes that the fisheries and aquatic sciences section brought in approximately \$2.7 million in external grant funding over the three years from 2010-11 through 2013-14 (from sources such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S.G.S., and other federal agencies, Lake Superior Tribe of the Chippewa, Bayfield County, Dane County, WE Energies and the University of Illinois). The wildlife and forestry research section brought in external grant funding of approximately \$900,000 in fiscal years 2012-13 and 2013-14.

32. As shown in Attachment 3, currently, 6.40 positions in the Bureau of Science Services are vacant. As the Department does not currently plan to fill these positions if restored, these positions could be deleted [Alternative B3].

33. In testimony delivered to the Joint Committee on Finance on March 3, 2015, the DNR Secretary discussed a potential move to integrate science services staff into the other Department bureaus. Some DNR officials and others have argued that program bureaus (such as wildlife management or watershed management) could conduct any necessary research projects directly. The Department indicates that conversations regarding this potential plan have begun and will continue but that there is no official plan at this time. Further, some have argued that this approach

would reduce costs, and could be more efficient and eliminate or reduce any duplicative efforts that may exist between the bureaus and science services [Alternative C2].

34. Others have raised concerns that integrating all scientific research within the program bureaus may reduce the credibility of the agency's studies. They believe that scientists and researchers could be pressured to deliver research outcomes that support specific Department goals, and that an independent Bureau of Science Services should be maintained. The Department's scientific research can be used to support DNR policy decisions that may face legal challenge. Regarding whether the Department would move to integrate science services staff into the program bureaus were the science services positions to be restored, the Department stated that it was too early to tell and that the outcome of the budget will inform options. Whatever the arrangement, the Department indicates that DNR will continue to have individuals solely responsible for research, chemistry, and other science-based activities. If the Committee wanted to ensure that a Bureau of Science Services were maintained, it could specify this [Alternative C1].

ALTERNATIVES

A. Educators

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to delete \$874,200 annually (\$148,500 FED and \$725,700 SEG) and 10.0 natural resources educator and 1.0 magazine specialist positions (1.75 FED and 9.25 SEG).

2. Restore \$148,500 FED annually and 1.75 positions and \$21,200 fish and wildlife account SEG annually and 0.25 position.

| ALT A2 | Change to Bill | |
|--------|----------------|-------------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$297,000 | 1.75 |
| SEG | <u>42,400</u> | <u>0.25</u> |
| Total | \$339,400 | 2.00 |

3. Restore \$148,500 FED annually and 1.75 positions and \$587,300 SEG annually and 7.25 positions (the 2.0 vacant positions would be eliminated).

| ALT A3 | Change to Bill | |
|--------|------------------|-------------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$297,000 | 1.75 |
| SEG | <u>1,174,600</u> | <u>7.25</u> |
| Total | \$1,471,600 | 9.00 |

4. Restore \$81,700 natural resources magazine SEG annually and 1.0 position. [This could be adopted in addition to Alternative A2.]

| ALT A4 | Change to Bill | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| SEG | \$163,400 | 1.00 |

5. Restore \$874,200 annually (\$148,500 FED and \$725,700 SEG) and 11.0 positions (1.75 FED, and 9.25 SEG) to maintain current law.

| ALT A5 | Change to Bill | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$297,000 | 1.75 |
| SEG | <u>1,451,400</u> | <u>9.25</u> |
| Total | \$1,748,400 | 11.00 |

B. Science Services

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to delete \$1,861,200 annually (\$914,000 FED, \$103,800 PR, \$843,400 SEG) and 18.40 science services positions (9.25 FED, 1.25 PR, 7.9 SEG).

2. Restore \$914,000 FED annually and 9.25 positions.

| ALT B2 | Change to Bill | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$1,828,000 | 9.25 |

3. Restore \$1,369,300 annually \$694,600 FED, \$34,600 PR and \$640,100 SEG and 12.0 positions (6.25 FED, 0.25 PR, 5.5 SEG) [6.40 vacant positions would be eliminated].

| ALT B3 | Change to Bill | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$1,389,200 | 6.25 |
| PR | 69,200 | 0.25 |
| SEG | <u>1,280,200</u> | <u>5.50</u> |
| Total | \$2,738,600 | 12.00 |

4. Restore \$1,861,200 annually (\$914,000 FED, \$103,800 PR, \$843,400 SEG) and 18.40 science services positions (9.25 FED, 1.25 PR, 7.9 SEG) to maintain current law.

| ALT B4 | Change to Bill | |
|--------|------------------|-------------|
| | Funding | Positions |
| FED | \$1,828,000 | 9.25 |
| PR | 207,600 | 1.25 |
| SEG | <u>1,686,800</u> | <u>7.90</u> |
| Total | 3,722,400 | 18.40 |

C. Independent Science Bureau

1. In addition to any action taken under B, specify that the Department maintain a Bureau of Science Services within DNR.

2. Take no action.

Prepared by: Erin Probst
Attachments

ATTACHMENT 1

Natural Resources Educator Positions Under Current Law and Governor*

| <u>Program</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>FTE Filled</u> | <u>FTE Vacant</u> | <u>Total Authorized</u> | <u>Change Under Bill</u> | <u>Authorized Under Governor</u> | <u>Fund Source</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Communication and Education | Natural Resources Educator- Adv. | 2.00 | | 2.00 | -1.00 | 1.00 | FED |
| | | 1.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | -4.00 | -1.00 | Conservation Fund SEG* |
| Fisheries Management | Natural Resources Educator- Adv. | 0.75 | | 0.75 | -0.75 | 0.00 | FED |
| | | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.25 | -0.25 | 0.00 | Fish and Wildlife SEG |
| Parks | Natural Resources Educator-Sr. | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | FED |
| | | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | GPR/Parks SEG** |
| | Natural Resources Educator- Adv./Sr | 4.00 | 0.00 | 4.00 | -3.00 | 1.00 | Parks SEG |
| Southern Forests | Natural Resources Educator-Sr. | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | -1.00 | 1.00 | Forestry Account SEG |
| Wildlife Management | Natural Resources Educator-Sr. | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | PR |
| | | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | Fish and Wildlife SEG |
| Waste Management | Natural Resources Educator- Adv. | <u>1.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>1.00</u> | <u>-1.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | Environmental Management SEG |
| | | 16.00 | 2.00 | 18.00 | -11.00 | 7.00 | |

*Excludes 1.0 natural resources magazine specialist eliminated under the educator item; but includes 1.0 educator eliminated under the consolidate marketing services in Tourism item (addressed in a separate budget paper).

**The bill converts this position from GPR to parks SEG.

ATTACHMENT 2

Natural Resources Educator Positions by Program and Fund Source

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>FTE</u> | <u>Function/Description</u> | <u>Funding Source</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | Communication & Education | 1.0 | South Central Public Affairs Manager; Sauk Prairie Recreational Area; Columbia County Shooting Range; Prairie du Sac Fish Passage; Mazomanie Beach; All hazards incident management team; Digesters. | FED |
| | | 1.0 | Law Enforcement Public Affairs Manager; Warden Recruitment Training; Warden Marketing, Outreach and Promotion; Law Enforcement Newsletter; Statewide Incident Management Team member; Forestry wildfire communications; Hunter Education; Hmong Community Outreach; Recreational Vehicle Licensing and Safety; Emergency Management Responses; Social Media . | FED |
| | | 1.0 | Project WET; Project Wild; Mackenzie Center. | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | Fisheries Management | 1.0 | Angler Education, teacher and volunteer workshops (including Project WET & Wild), partnerships for after-school and youth fishing programs, provides materials and gear to fishing clubs, civic organizations, parks and recreational departments. | 0.75 FED 0.25 Fish and Wildlife SEG |
| Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | Parks | 1.0 | Chief Parks Naturalist Educator | Parks SEG |
| Natural Resources Educator- Senior | | 1.0 | Interstate State Parks Educator | Parks SEG |
| | | 1.0 | Penninsula State Park Educator | GPR - Parks SEG under bill |
| | | 1.0 | Devil's Lake State Park Educator | Parks SEG |
| | | 1.0 | Chippewa Moraine State Park Educator | FED |
| Natural Resources Educator- Senior | Southern Forests | 1.0 | Richard Bong Southern Forest Educator | Parks SEG |
| | | 1.0 | Kettle Moraine-Northern Unit Southern Forest Educator | Parks SEG |
| Natural Resources Educator- Senior | Wildlife Management | 1.0 | Horicon Marsh outdoor/wildlife programs | Fish and Wildlife SEG |

| <u>Position</u> | <u>Program</u> | <u>FTE</u> | <u>Function/Description</u> | <u>Funding Source</u> |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | 1.0 | Crex Meadows wildlife programs | PR - Friends group funds salary |
| Natural Resources Educator- Senior | | 1.0 | Mead wildlife programs | PR - Friends group funds salary |
| Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | Waste Management | 1.0 | Outreach & Education for Waste & Materials Management, Publications & Newsletters. | Environmental Fund SEG |
| Vacant | | | | |
| Natural Resources Educator - Advanced | Communication & Education | 2.0 | Wisconsin Environmental Education Board Liaison; Chair DNR's Education Team; Mackenzie Center ; Public Records; Keep Wildlife Wild; Social Media. | Conservation Fund SEG |
| | | <hr/> 18.0 | | |

ATTACHMENT 3

Bureau of Science Services Positions Under Current Law and Under Governor

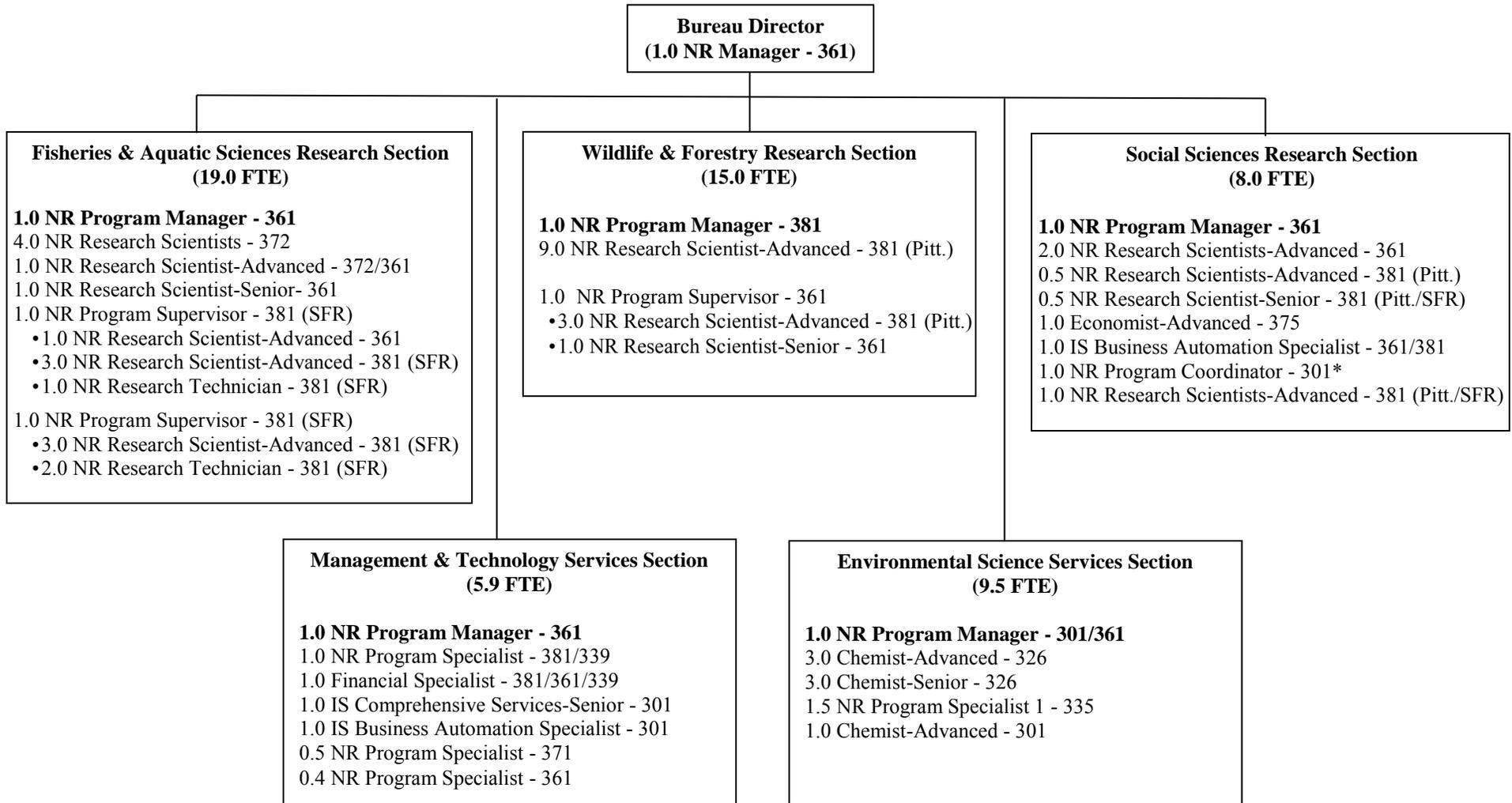
| <u>Title</u> | <u>FTE Filled</u> | <u>FTE Vacant</u> | <u>Total Authorized</u> | <u>Reduction Under Bill</u> | <u>Authorized Under Governor</u> | <u>Fund Source</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Natural Resources Research Scientist- Advanced/Senior | 16.00 | 2.00 | 18.00 | -9.25 | 8.75 | FED |
| | 4.50 | 0.00 | 4.50 | -0.50 | 4.00 | Nonpoint SEG |
| | <u>6.50</u> | <u>1.00</u> | <u>7.50</u> | <u>-7.40</u> | <u>0.10</u> | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Subtotal | 27.00 | 3.00 | 30.00 | -17.15 | 12.85 | |
| Chemist- Advanced/Senior | 6.00 | 1.00 | 7.00 | -1.25 | 5.75 | PR - Lab certification fees |
| Economist | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | Petroleum Inspection Fund SEG |
| Financial Specialist | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.50 | Conservation Fund SEG |
| | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.25 | FED |
| | <u>0.25</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.25</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.25</u> | PR |
| Subtotal | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | |
| Information Services Business Automation Specialist | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | GPR |
| | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.50 | FED |
| | <u>0.50</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.50</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.50</u> | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Subtotal | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | |
| Information Services Comprehensive Services - Senior | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | GPR |
| Natural Resources Manager- Bureau Director | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Natural Resources Program Manager | 0.61 | 0.00 | 0.61 | 0.00 | 0.61 | GPR |
| | 1.00 | 1.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | FED |
| | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.39 | 0.00 | 0.39 | PR |
| | <u>2.00</u> | <u>1.00</u> | <u>3.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>3.00</u> | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Subtotal | 4.00 | 2.00 | 6.00 | 0.00 | 6.00 | |

| <u>Title</u> | <u>FTE Filled</u> | <u>FTE Vacant</u> | <u>Total Authorized</u> | <u>Reduction Under Bill</u> | <u>Authorized Under Governor</u> | <u>Fund Source</u> |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Natural Resources Program Supervisor | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 2.00 | FED |
| Natural Resources Program Specialist | 0.75 | 0.00 | 0.75 | 0.00 | 0.75 | FED |
| | 1.75 | 0.00 | 1.75 | 0.00 | 1.75 | PR |
| | 0.00 | 0.40 | 0.40 | 0.00 | 0.40 | Conservation Fund SEG |
| | <u>0.50</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.50</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.50</u> | Environmental Fund SEG |
| Subtotal | 3.00 | 0.40 | 3.40 | 0.00 | 3.40 | |
| Natural Resources Research Technician | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | FED |
| | <u>2.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>2.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>2.00</u> | Conservation Fund SEG |
| Subtotal | 3.00 | 0.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 | 3.00 | |
| Natural Resources Program Coordinator* | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 1.00 | GPR |
| Total | 52.00 | 6.40 | 58.40 | -18.40 | 40.00 | |

*The bill would transfer 1.0 natural resources program coordinator position from the human resources subprogram to the science services subprogram.

ATTACHMENT 4

Bureau of Science Services (58.4 FTE)



Key:

361 = Conservation SEG
 371 = Environmental SEG
 372 = Nonpoint SEG
 375 = Petroleum Inspection SEG
 326, 335, 339 = PR

381 = FED
 Pitt. = Federal Pittman Robertson
 SFR = Federal Sport Fish Restoration

*The bill would transfer 1.0 natural resources program coordinator position from the human resources subprogram to the science services subprogram.