



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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May 15, 2001

Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #655

State Snowmobile Education and Enforcement (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife and Recreation)

[LFB 2001-03 Budget Summary: Page 477, #22]

CURRENT LAW

The Department is responsible for state enforcement of snowmobile laws through conservation wardens and for coordination of snowmobile safety programs. In 1999-00, DNR wardens logged 12,687 hours on snowmobile-related safety and enforcement and issued 1,427 snowmobile citations.

In addition, DNR is responsible for coordinating snowmobile safety courses taught by instructors certified by the Department. 1999 Act 9 created a requirement that effective January 1, 2001, any person born after January 1, 1985, must hold a valid snowmobile safety certificate in order to operate a snowmobile. In 1999, 7,703 people received certificates upon successfully completing one of the snowmobiling safety courses offered throughout the state.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$108,000 in 2001-02 (-\$155,700 GPR and \$263,700 SEG from the snowmobile account) and \$91,800 in 2002-03 (-\$155,700 GPR and \$247,500 SEG from the snowmobile account) to transfer 3.0 positions from GPR to SEG and to increase funding for state snowmobile enforcement, aids administration (\$3,100 annually), and training efforts.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Prior to 1997 Act 27, 4.5 wardens and a half-time program assistant were funded from the snowmobile account of the conservation fund. That act converted the funding of these 5.0

positions to GPR. Subsequently, 1997 Act 237 provided one warden position funded from the snowmobile account. Under 1999 Act 9, these six enforcement positions were transferred (five GPR and one SEG) to tribal gaming program revenue allocations and a seventh position was authorized for mandatory snowmobile education.

2. Under the Governor’s proposal, two vacant conservation warden positions and one program assistant position would be transferred from GPR to snowmobile SEG funding. In addition, the position currently specified as a program assistant would be converted to a third conservation warden position (requiring an additional \$42,100 in 2001-02 and \$25,100 in 2002-03). This would provide 10 enforcement and education related staff and have the effect of increasing available hours dedicated to snowmobile enforcement and education purposes by approximately 43%. However, as these GPR positions had formerly supported broader conservation law enforcement purposes, other areas (such as fish and game enforcement) would experience an equivalent loss of support.

3. In a supplement to its budget request to DOA, DNR requested increased local snowmobile trail aids, conservation wardens, increased air patrols and increases in county enforcement aids. Funding for these initiatives was proposed to come from doubling the costs of a two-year snowmobile registration (from \$20 to \$40). The bill would provide three snowmobile enforcement positions and would increase funding for snowmobile warden overtime by \$62,800 in 2001-02 and \$63,600 in 2002-03. Further, (as discussed in separate issue papers) the bill would substantially increase snowmobile trail aids and county enforcement aids.

4. Table 1 shows snowmobile registrations and fatalities in Wisconsin by season since 1994. As of April 20, 2001, 26 snowmobile fatalities had occurred for the 2000-01 season. While DNR promulgated an emergency rule establishing a night-time speed limit of 50 miles per hour during most of the 2000-01 snowmobiling season, conservation wardens indicate that no other extraordinary efforts were undertaken to reduce snowmobile fatalities. It is argued by some that substantially increased enforcement efforts, in conjunction with speed limits, are needed to adequately address snowmobile accidents resulting in injury and death. The three snowmobile wardens, increased overtime hours and a 150% increase in county enforcement aids under the bill are intended to address concerns related to snowmobile enforcement levels.

<u>Season</u>	<u>Registered Snowmobiles</u>	<u>Snowmobile Fatalities</u>
1994-95	182,124	21
1995-96	192,992	22
1996-97	203,024	34
1997-98	208,354	21
1998-99	214,192	20
1999-00	223,665	37
2000-01	243,382	26 *

*As of April 20, 2001.

ALTERNATIVES TO BASE

1. Approve the Governor’s recommendation to provide \$108,000 in 2001-02 (-\$155,700 GPR and \$263,700 snowmobile SEG) and \$91,800 in 2002-03 (-\$155,700 GPR and \$247,500 snowmobile SEG) to transfer 3.0 positions from GPR to SEG and to increase funding for state snowmobile enforcement, aids administration (\$3,100 annually), and training efforts.

<u>Alternative 1</u>	<u>GPR</u>	<u>SEG</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	- \$311,400	\$511,200	\$199,800
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$0]</i>
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Base)	- 3.00	3.00	0.00
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00]</i>

2. Maintain current law.

<u>Alternative 2</u>	<u>GPR</u>	<u>SEG</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2001-03 FUNDING (Change to Base)	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>\$311,400</i>	<i>- \$511,200</i>	<i>- \$199,800]</i>
2002-03 POSITIONS (Change to Base)	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>[Change to Bill]</i>	<i>3.00</i>	<i>- 3.00</i>	<i>0.00]</i>

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