

## TESTIMONY

### WDNR NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD MEETING

August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015

3.B.1. – Request adoption of Emergency Board Order WM-05-15(E) and Permanent Board Order WM-06-15 adoption request: proposed rules modifying Ch. NR 10 related to establishing the 2015 migratory bird hunting seasons

#### **WISCONSIN WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION:**

Supports adoption of the proposed 2015 waterfowl season structure,  
as outlined by WDNR staff.

Chairman Cole, esteemed members of the Board, Madame Secretary; thank you for allowing me time to address your group today.

My name is Don Kirby, I represent the members of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, from all over the state, as the Executive Director of this organization.

Today, I return to testify our support for the season proposal that has been laid out before you. Some of you may recall that one year ago, I stood before your group, to request a significant change be made in last year's proposal: to eliminate the delayed starting time on opening days. To our disappointment, my request was rejected. However, from that meeting last August, has come today's result, the culmination of the efforts of many groups and individuals.

Over the course of the past year, many interested parties have given Kent and Taylor input on this issue, including the WWF migratory committee, the attendees of the WI Waterfowl Hunters Conference in March, the migratory committee members, and Spring Hearing attendees of the Conservation Congress (which approved the change, for the second time in five years!), as well as our own

membership survey from May of this year, finally culminating with the series of public hearings around the state, last week.

Overwhelmingly, the response from the most avid waterfowl hunters has been approval of eliminating this delayed start, and the Department's own surveys have indicated a slight majority in approval, by hunters overall. To his credit, Kent has sought out input from a wide variety of sources, and has done the right thing, and responded to the feedback he received. Opening day will be unfettered at last!

In a time where the DNR is sometimes criticized for alleged failures to respond to public input, the efforts of Kent Van Horn and Taylor Finger should be acknowledged, as an example of responding to their stakeholders. Thank you, to these gentlemen for their efforts.

It is comforting to be witness to all the stakeholders' combined efforts, as we move forward into a new system and timeline for setting waterfowl seasons and related regulations. This year, due to a federal change affecting all flyways, we'll be taking up this topic again, later this fall – a full four to six months earlier than we have before. We at WWA look forward to continued cooperation and partnership, as we work through these changes, and those further ahead; as we review the waterfowl hunting zones delineated within our state, in 2016, and challenges yet unknown, in years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Board.

Presented By:

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