



TO: Chairman Mursau and Members of the Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry:
 RE: Testimony Opposing AB 600 Provisions

We are speaking to you on behalf of Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, WI Waterfowl Association and Green Bay Duck Hunters Association, with a combined membership of more than 60,000 sportsmen and women in Wisconsin regarding the proposed legislation AB600.

Two items are of most concern due to potential negative impacts upon Wisconsin's sportsmen/women and outdoor economy.

1. The creation of a general permit authorizing any riparian owner to remove up to 30 cubic yards of material annually from a lake bed on an inland lake, and up to 100 cubic yards annually from an outlying water. Also says WDNR cannot forbid use of mechanical equipment to conduct the activity.
 - a. These nearshore areas are some of the most productive fish and wildlife habitats on WI lakes. Loosening protection of these areas could have a dramatic effect on long term stability of fish and wildlife populations.
 - b. These actions will negatively impact recreational opportunity. Nearshore emergent vegetation currently provides cover needed for legal hunting of waterfowl. Nearshore submergent and emergent vegetation provide excellent angling opportunities.
 - c. Hunters and anglers fuel a \$4 billion industry and support more than 50,000 jobs in Wisconsin. These are Wisconsin jobs that cannot be exported to another country!
 - d. These actions can already be permitted under current legislation with proper environmental considerations in place.

Our Recommendation: Because these actions can already be permitted, we do not support this provision to ensure against major loss of nearshore habitat.

2. Establishing a requirement for non-federal wetlands that DNR shall limit its review to those practical alternatives (to avoid & minimize wetland impacts) to which the following apply: 1) The alternative is consistent with the purpose and scope of the project; 2) The alternative is located at the site of the discharge or located adjacent to that site if both sites are owned by the same person.
 - a. This provision will expose an estimated 1,000,000 acres of wetlands with little to no protection from permanent destruction. These small wetlands scattered across state provide much of the breeding habitat for WI waterfowl and other wildlife. Wisconsin has already lost 47 percent of its wetlands and cannot afford to accelerate additional loss.
 - b. These actions can already be permitted under current legislation with proper environmental considerations in place. New ILF Mitigation and other changes to legislation in 2012 have allowed for increased flexibility while maintaining some level of protection in place. These changes are working as indicated by the doubling of annual authorized wetland fill activities since these changes.

Our Recommendation: Because these actions can already be permitted, we do not support this provision in AB600.

Outdoor recreation is **BIG BUSINESS** in Wisconsin, and is fueled by habitat on both public and private land where sportsmen and women can hunt, fish, trap, birdwatch and conduct other recreational activities. In 2013, 1.55 million Wisconsin hunters and anglers spent \$4.03 billion, or approximately \$11 million dollars a day. Hunters and anglers support more jobs in Wisconsin than the University of Wisconsin, Menard's, and Kohl's combined, the state's three largest employers (55,722 vs. 29,964). AB600, as currently written, would have long term negative effects on hunting, fishing and trapping in Wisconsin.

Our organizations focus on conserving wildlife habitat for sportsmen and women in Wisconsin. As statewide representatives with more than 60,000 members, we specifically request that AB 600 be revised to eliminate:

- The creation of a general permit for nearshore dredging.
- The provision to lessen protections on non-federal wetlands.

We encourage the Wisconsin Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus members to unite with sportsmen and women in opposition to these changes as well. Together we can ensure that future generations of sportsmen and women will have productive and natural resources upon which to recreate, and abundant wildlife to enjoy. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted by Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever & National Wild Turkey Federation, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Green Bay Duck Hunters.

Cc: – WI Senate Members
 – WI Assembly Members