

January 24, 2017

Wisconsin Governor, Legislators and Department of Natural Resources

We, the undersigned conservation organizations operating in the State of Wisconsin, recognize that revenues necessary to properly manage fish and wildlife habitat and populations have not kept pace with the expenses of doing so. According to the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation fish and wildlife are public resources, managed in trust for the public by the state natural resources agency. Hunters, trappers and anglers fund over 80% of conservation of all fish and wildlife through their license fees and excise taxes. In keeping with that tradition we are asking our state agency and state legislature to please consider the following proposed dedicated fee increases. This proposal is supported by the sponsoring groups specifically, and the conservation groups below as a whole.

- **Increase Otter Tag Application Fee from \$3.00 to \$8.00** – *Sponsored by Wisconsin Trappers Association*. Estimated \$80,800 additional revenue generated annually. These funds are dedicated to increased aquatic furbearer population research.
- **Increase Bear Tag Application Fee from \$4.40 to \$10.00** – *Sponsored by Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association*. Estimated \$603,000 additional revenue generated annually. Funds dedicated to black bear population research.
- **Increase State Waterfowl Stamp from \$7.00 to \$12.00** – *Sponsored by Wisconsin Waterfowl Association and Ducks Unlimited*. Estimated \$303,500 additional revenue generated annually. Funds dedicated to waterfowl habitat improvements and developments.
- **Increase Inland Trout Stamp from \$10.00 to \$15.00** – *Sponsored by Trout Unlimited*. Estimated \$718,000 additional revenue generated annually. Funds to be used according to the current uses described in statute for the inland trout stamp.
- **Increase Great Lakes Salmon/Trout Stamp from \$10.00 to \$15.00** – *Sponsored by Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishermen*. Estimated \$662,300 additional revenue generated annually. Funds to be used according to the current uses described in statute for the salmon/trout stamp.
- **Increase Archery and Gun Deer Licenses from \$24.00 to \$27.00** – *Sponsored by Wisconsin Conservation Congress*. Estimated \$1,753,900 additional revenue generated annually. Funds to be used accordingly – 33% for Young Forest Initiative and northern forest habitat enhancement/management, and 66% for deer research and deer population metrics development and maintenance. This change was recommended in the Deer Trustee Report.
- **Remove the Burden Of Regulating Great Lakes Commercial Fishing from Sport Anglers** – *Sponsored by Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishermen*. Estimated \$750,000 additional revenue generated annually. Currently approximately \$750,000 of sportsmen dollars from the Fish and Wildlife account are used to administer and regulate the Great Lakes commercial fishing industry. While the commercial fishing industry is an important part of Wisconsin's economy, we feel it is inappropriate for the sportsmen and women of the state to pay for regulating commercial operations. We recommend developing a funding strategy sufficient to cover regulatory costs collected from the industry.

The sponsor groups brought these proposals to the sporting community and we support their efforts to increase fees upon themselves. The hunters, trappers, and anglers of Wisconsin are once again stepping forward and asking you, our public representatives, to increase these fees in order to provide for the future of the sporting lifestyles we love. Collectively these seven proposals would generate an estimated additional \$4,871,500 annually to supplement existing funding for targeted natural resources management in the State of Wisconsin. We recognize that this support is tied to specific areas of interest and will not align to meet all of the funding needs for the department, but it will help to close the funding gap in these areas. The undersigned groups represent hundreds of thousands of dedicated outdoorsmen and women. We respectfully urge you to take these actions.

Signed:

- Ducks Unlimited
- Federation of Great Lakes Sport Fishermen
- Trout Unlimited
- Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association
- Wisconsin Conservation Congress
- Wisconsin Trappers Association
- Wisconsin Waterfowl Association