



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

## Senate Bill 94

**Testimony from Representative Keith Ripp and Senator Luther Olsen  
Senate Committee on Labor and Government Reform**

*April 9th, 2015*

We would like to thank Chairman Nass and committee members for allowing us to present testimony today in favor of Senate Bill 94.

We have authored this legislation at the request of constituents in the campground industry who have encountered regulatory challenges because seasonally-occupied cabins are currently considered and regulated under the one-family and two-family dwelling code as residences that are occupied throughout the year.

Because of these regulations, campgrounds have struggled to invest here in Wisconsin. We have brought forward SB 94 because these camping units are not occupied throughout the year, and they should be treated differently than one-family and two-family dwellings. It is important to note that there are currently Wisconsin campgrounds with these units that are now unable to use them.

Last year, we authored a bill that would have provided an exclusion from the statutory definition of a dwelling to reflect units that are only used seasonally. After working with stakeholders over the last year, we have taken a different approach with SB 94. This legislation directs the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) to promulgate rules for the dwelling code that would apply only to these camping units as long as the camping unit is located in a permitted campground.

These regulatory improvements will aid the campground industry by providing the appropriate level of oversight for certain camping-related functions. With clarity in the administrative rules regarding these camping units, Wisconsin will realize investments here that may not otherwise occur.

We are currently in the process of drafting an amendment that will hopefully address some of the concerns we heard during the Assembly public hearing.

Thank you again for allowing us to testify on SB 94. We ask for your support and would be happy to answer any questions.



formerly the  
Wisconsin Innkeepers Association

Serving the lodging  
industry for more than  
100 years

April 9, 2015

To: **Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Government Reform**  
**Senator Stephen Nass, Chairman**  
From: **Trisha A. Pugal, CAE**  
**President, CEO**  
RE: **Request for Changes to SB 94 on "Camping Units"**

On behalf of over 700 lodging properties ranging from small to large and located throughout the state, over 100 of which offer cabins or cottages for rent to the traveling public primarily on a seasonal basis, we ask the Committee to modify SB 94 to ensure clarity of coverage and that the traveling public is adequately protected whether they rent a cabin, cottage, or "camping unit" at a campground or at a small family resort.

Different than renting a space in a campground where an individual can pitch their own tent or bring their own portable structure, a cabin or like physical structure rented to the public for an overnight stay is a different market with consumer expectations for safety regardless of where this structure is located. The entire lodging industry depends on the upholding of public safety expectations in lodging structures, as this is our collective reputation in Wisconsin at stake as well.

Currently, cabins located in campgrounds or in small resorts are licensed and inspected under the general category of "tourism rooming house" by the DHS, a category covering all structures that are not bed & breakfasts with less than 5 sleeping rooms rented out to the public for overnight stays, whether seasonal or year-round.

SB 94 provides considerable leverage to DSPS to not only generate separate, most likely less restrictive regulations for what would be deemed a "camping unit", but also to create a definition of just what a 'camping unit" would be. As requested of the Assembly Committee considering the companion bill, we suggest that a more clear definition of "camping unit" should be outlined in the legislation up front, so that all structures renting lodging to the public can clearly identify what cabins are impacted and what would change.

It is our opinion that there is justification in differentiating between specific very basic rustic cabin structures that are rented to the public for overnight stays that would be reasonable, and yet would not jeopardize meeting the expectations of the public for safety.

Including a definition of "camping unit" that would clarify that it is a yurt or cabin without plumbing would be the best in providing differentiation.

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However for safety reasons, we believe there should still be a requirement that any electrical work connected to this camping unit must meet the Uniform Building Code. Whether it is a cabin or a camping unit, the electrical wiring of a structure renting out to the public should follow code to ensure that air conditioning units, microwaves, and other appliances that many of these units have, can be safely connected.

We believe that a cabin/camping unit without plumbing, which requires the renter to use common sinks, toilets, and shower facilities located elsewhere on the premises, can safely warrant different regulations, as the safety concerns are less complex.

We welcome overnight guests in all types of licensed overnight lodging structures, and feel it is imperative to the state's tourism industry to provide a safe experience and environment to make our state a great place to visit and return to many times in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.