

ALEX A. DALLMAN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in favor of Assembly Bill 658

Assembly Committee on Environment

January 12th, 2022

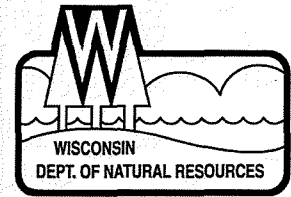
Thank you, Chairman Kitchens and committee members, for allowing me to testify before you concerning Assembly Bill 658, relating to a Department of Natural Resources report on partnering with the private aquaculture industry. I would also like to thank Senator Marklein for his leadership on this legislation.

This bill is part of the Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Act and would require DNR to prepare a report that identifies opportunities for partnering with the private aquaculture industry for increased stocking of desirable sport fish in lakes and streams. The deadline for the report is no later than January 31, 2022.

Wisconsin's private aquaculture industry has been around since our states' founding and it has never been more ready to expand and assist our public sector. We have seen public and private aquaculture partnerships have success in Wisconsin. The Walleye Initiative has allowed for a much higher number of walleyes to be stocked into our lakes, which has benefited our fishing related economy. AB 658 will work to build off of the Wisconsin Walleye Initiative and stock many other types of sporting fish, such as musky and lake trout.

We must continue to do all that we can to strengthen and preserve our great outdoors heritage for generations to come and this bill will certainly help with that.

Thank you again, Chairman Kitchens, for the opportunity to testify before this committee today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Assembly Committee on Environment

2021 Assembly Bill 658

Report on Partnering with the Private Aquaculture Industry

January 12, 2022

Good morning Chair Kitchens and members of the Committee. My name is Todd Kalish, and I am the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Fisheries Management for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Assembly Bill 658, relating to a DNR report on partnering with the private aquaculture industry.

The department prioritizes developing and sustaining partnerships with diverse stakeholders to meet mutual needs, maximize efficiencies, and leverage limited resources to enhance public fisheries throughout the state. The department has a long history of collaborating with private aquaculture entities and recently pursued a variety of initiatives to enhance relationships through 2017 Wisconsin Act 21.

The department is well prepared to develop and present a report identifying potential and existing private aquaculture partnership opportunities.

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, we would like to thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



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January 12, 2022

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Environment:

RE: Wisconsin Conservation Congress position on Assembly Bills AB-658 (WDNR partnering with Aquaculture Industry Report), AB-670 (DNR Habitat Work Report), AB- 673 (WDNR Brook Trout stocking in Lake Michigan)

On behalf of the over 300 delegates of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) who represent the citizens of this state, I would like to provide our position on the aforementioned bills.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress does not support AB-658 (SB-617) Partnering with Aquaculture Industry Report or AB-670(SB-614) related to Habitat Work Report. The WCC feels that the addition of such "reports" simply adds unnecessary bureaucracy—adding paperwork for the sake of paperwork. These do nothing for the actual natural resources of our state and directs limited WDNR funds & resources to unnecessary uses.

AB-676 (SB-612) related to WDNR Stocking Lake Trout into Lake Michigan (no appropriation). WCC opposes the passage of this bill in part because no funding source has been identified. The bill also fails to provide a true source for this stocking. Our state hatcheries are at capacity producing fry of other species. We would have to reduce production and stocking of currently produced species (like great lakes salmon) to provide additional brook trout production and stocking. We do not feel this is the best utilization of our state funds for the return on investment.

The WCC is normally heavily involved in the creation of the rules and regulations that govern and protect Wisconsin's Natural Resources as we are advisory to the WDNR and NRB and provide the Wisconsin Legislature with valuable citizen input, however in the case of these bills we were not involved at any level. The involvement of the WCC provides the sportsmen and women of Wisconsin an opportunity to provide their ideas and feedback on regulations for the use of Wisconsin's natural resources. This process that allows for the public's involvement also helps to ensure the protection of Wisconsin's natural resources now and for the future.

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

Thank you for your careful consideration of our input.



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Blatter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "B".

Tony Blatter, WCC Chair