



Amy Loudenbeck

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S 31ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Testimony before Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Assembly Bill 766
Rep. Amy Loudenbeck**

Thank you, Chairman Mursau and committee members for your time today and hearing Assembly Bill 766, relating to boating enforcement aids and making an appropriation.

AB 766 increases expenditure authority of SEG conservation funds from the boat registration account for local boating law enforcements aids, and increases the aid payment limit to up to 80% of eligible costs.

In Wisconsin, communities with lakes of at least 100 acres or one mile of riverfront are eligible to receive local boating law enforcement aids for up to 75% of the total costs of the operation and maintenance of local water safety patrols. Eligible costs include patrol hours, search and rescue missions, and training boating safety enforcement officers. To receive enforcement aids, a local boating safety patrol must log at least 80 hours of boating enforcement in a year.

I currently represent Williams Bay and Fontana in Walworth County. Both communities are on Geneva Lake, a 5,401 acre lake with a maximum depth of 135 feet. During the summer, Geneva Lake experiences heavy boat traffic and boasts an incredibly high number of registered vessels. A yearly boat count in the summer of 2019 found 5,860 vessels on the lake.

On large lakes like Geneva Lake, it is incredibly important to have dedicated law enforcement available to patrol the waters and help ensure everyone's safety and we are fortunate to have the Geneva Lake Law Enforcement Agency, which is its own sworn police department funded by a shared agreement among four lakefront municipalities.

Lots of other Wisconsin lake communities have law enforcement functions that receive reimbursement under the current program. I have provided a list for committee members to review so they can appreciate how many agencies are supported by the DNR reimbursement funds, and can also see the benefit that would be achieved if the rate of reimbursement were increased to 80%.

It is important to note this funding is from boat registration fees. The money is going back to benefit the people who pay the fees. It keeps the lakes they are using- to enjoy their motorboat, personal watercraft or sailboat, safe for everyone.

Since fiscal year 2009-10, DNR has been authorized to expend up to \$1,386,000 from the boat registration account of the segregated (SEG) conservation fund for boating enforcement aids. Eligible reimbursement requests have exceeded state funding for boating enforcement aids each year since current funding levels were set. DNR has been using federal grant dollars to reach the 75% reimbursement level, so another benefit of passing AB 766 would be the future availability of federal Recreational Boating Safety funds to cover other expenses in the water resources account which could help prevent a future structural deficit.

Finally, it is important to note that Wisconsin has averaged 619,000 boat registrations for over the last twenty years, and the boating registration account has adequate funds to support this additional commitment.

Thank you for your kind attention and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.

Boat Patrol Final Audit Payments

FY2019

FY2020

Municipality	County	Prorated Payment on:	Prorated Payment on:
		Total Claimed: \$2,828,721.38	Total Claimed: \$2,749,934.15
Adams County Sheriff's Dept.	Adams	\$ 20,569.69	\$ 24,455.81
Rome, Town	Adams	\$ 11,410.73	\$ 8,280.54
Barron County Sheriff's Dept.	Barron	\$ 6,647.07	\$ 8,242.63
Bayfield County Sheriff's Dept.	Bayfield	\$ 10,215.93	\$ 9,365.05
Brown County Sheriff's Dept.	Brown	\$ 43,241.69	\$ 36,835.54
Green Bay, City	Brown	\$ 24,705.60	\$ 32,698.83
Chippewa County Sheriff's Dept.	Chippewa	\$ 22,504.40	\$ 33,315.57
Clark County Sheriff's Dept.	Clark	\$ 4,871.83	\$ 6,303.83
Columbia County Sheriff's Dept.	Columbia	\$ 9,637.78	\$ 10,893.20
Dane County Sheriff's Dept.	Dane	\$ 212,415.04	\$ 166,101.68
Dodge County Sheriff's Dept.	Dodge	\$ 12,045.11	\$ 8,107.68
Door County Sheriff's Dept.	Door	\$ 5,231.63	\$ 5,313.91
Douglas County Sheriff's Dept.	Douglas	\$ 24,093.36	\$ 28,953.65
Dunn County Sheriff's Dept.	Dunn	\$ -	\$ 15,930.91
Fond du Lac County Sheriff's Dept.	Fond du Lac	\$ 16,939.26	\$ 18,415.94
Osceola, Town	Fond du Lac	\$ 4,992.31	\$ 5,375.55
Forest County Sheriff's Dept.	Forest	\$ 3,243.12	\$ 2,916.59
Green Lake County Sheriff's Dept.	Green lake	\$ 17,499.82	\$ 4,904.82
Jefferson County Sheriff's Dept.	Jefferson	\$ 10,393.80	\$ 18,774.78
Lake Mills, Town	Jefferson	\$ 17,690.99	\$ 17,522.25
Oakland, Town	Jefferson	\$ 7,120.21	\$ 7,651.83
Juneau County Sheriff's Dept.	Juneau	\$ 9,193.85	\$ 20,984.93
Camp & Center Lake Rehab District	Kenosha	\$ 11,807.57	\$ 9,940.62
Kenosha County Sheriff's Dept.	Kenosha	\$ 8,899.93	\$ 15,405.50
Paddock Lake, Village	Kenosha	\$ 4,800.20	\$ 5,867.73
Randall, Town	Kenosha	\$ 17,740.62	\$ 13,443.17
Twin Lakes, Village	Kenosha	\$ 12,354.97	\$ 7,934.12
Wheatland, Town	Kenosha	\$ 6,590.30	\$ -
LaCrosse, City PD	LaCrosse	\$ 37,153.80	\$ 25,431.04
LaCrosse County Sheriff's Dept.	LaCrosse	\$ 19,273.14	\$ 10,561.34
Lincoln County Sheriff's Dept.	Lincoln	\$ 12,252.78	\$ 10,602.59
Manitowoc County Sheriff's Dept.	Manitowoc	\$ 18,702.45	\$ 14,397.65
Marathon County Sheriff's Dept.	Marathon	\$ 10,153.06	\$ 12,251.45
Marinette County Sheriff's Dept.	Marinette	\$ 13,597.36	\$ 16,876.48
Stephenson, Town	Marinette	\$ 5,933.94	\$ 6,821.28
Menominee County Sheriff's Dept.	Menominee	\$ 4,213.32	\$ 4,090.58
Milwaukee, City	Milwaukee	\$ 342,548.37	\$ 337,929.72
Oconto County Sheriff's Dept.	Oconto	\$ 9,433.05	\$ 4,011.94
Minocqua/Woodruff Boat Patrol	Oneida	\$ 12,517.09	\$ 11,064.06
Oneida County Sheriff's Dept.	Oneida	\$ 16,610.70	\$ 10,531.55
Three Lakes, Town	Oneida	\$ 2,717.41	\$ 3,099.55
Outagamie County Sheriff's Dept.	Outagamie	\$ 11,282.79	\$ 11,078.86
Mequon, City	Ozaukee	\$ 8,344.21	\$ 6,370.53
Pierce County Sheriff's Dept.	Pierce	\$ 51,063.85	\$ 68,754.63

Balsam Lake, Village	Polk	\$	5,695.43	\$	-
Polk County Sheriff's Dept.	Polk	\$	13,052.84	\$	18,823.88
Portage County Sheriff's Dept.	Portage	\$	7,801.68	\$	6,499.27
Burlington, Town	Racine	\$	31,241.71	\$	25,400.09
Dover, Town	Racine	\$	16,436.87	\$	14,288.52
Norway, Town	Racine	\$	16,746.88	\$	15,364.75
Racine County Sheriff's Dept.	Racine	\$	42,358.05	\$	41,318.93
Waterford, Town	Racine	\$	13,140.78	\$	6,589.13
Beloit, Town	Rock	\$	8,239.37	\$	-
Rock County Sheriff's Dept.	Rock	\$	25,281.57	\$	26,073.72
Rock River Safety Patrol	Rock	\$	23,131.42	\$	22,380.37
Rusk County Sheriff's Dept.	Rusk	\$	7,700.85	\$	8,459.13
Lake Delton, Village	Sauk	\$	13,327.13	\$	10,134.53
Lavalle, Town	Sauk	\$	15,217.98	\$	16,339.60
Sauk County Sheriff's Dept.	Sauk	\$	12,316.13	\$	16,204.59
Sawyer County Sheriff's Dept.	Sawyer	\$	5,124.63	\$	6,688.41
Shawano County Sheriff's Dept.	Shawano	\$	4,177.50	\$	4,178.43
Elkhart Lake, Village	Sheboygan	\$	10,245.57	\$	8,783.19
Sheboygan County Sheriff's Dept.	Sheboygan	\$	12,333.23	\$	12,707.70
Saint Croix County Sheriff's Dept.	St. Croix	\$	35,317.24	\$	39,696.64
Vilas County Sheriff's Dept.	Vilas	\$	13,130.62	\$	10,329.58
Delavan, Town	Walworth	\$	26,188.85	\$	27,540.92
East Troy, Town	Walworth	\$	23,755.25	\$	22,677.06
Geneva Lake Law Enforcement	Walworth	\$	85,530.27	\$	107,573.88
Geneva, Town	Walworth	\$	7,767.02	\$	4,294.20
Lauderdale Lakes, Lake Mg.	Walworth	\$	81,440.40	\$	80,512.20
Troy, Town	Walworth	\$	19,561.31	\$	18,282.40
Whitewater, Town	Walworth	\$	12,992.20	\$	19,707.98
Big Cedar Lake P&R Dist.	Washington	\$	39,420.24	\$	32,762.38
Hartford, Town	Washington	\$	20,215.91	\$	23,125.91
Little Cedar Lake P&R Dist	Washington	\$	4,975.41	\$	4,646.68
Silver Lake P&R Dist.	Washington	\$	3,563.38	\$	4,253.51
Washington County Sheriff's Dept.	Washington	\$	4,480.32	\$	3,167.84
Chenequa, Village	Waukesha	\$	8,281.41	\$	5,982.68
Delafield, City	Waukesha	\$	24,164.65	\$	30,293.12
Eagle, Town	Waukesha	\$	10,366.03	\$	10,143.63
Lac La Belle, Village	Waukesha	\$	12,444.22	\$	17,296.63
Merton, Town	Waukesha	\$	23,082.79	\$	21,268.10
Mukwonago, Town	Waukesha	\$	7,878.32	\$	7,402.92
Muskego, City	Waukesha	\$	14,386.13	\$	14,365.38
Oconomowoc Lake, Village	Waukesha	\$	8,265.49	\$	8,955.15
Oconomowoc, City	Waukesha	\$	3,843.90	\$	2,977.53
Oconomowoc, Town	Waukesha	\$	29,906.06	\$	23,896.06
Pewaukee, Village	Waukesha	\$	29,605.38	\$	27,919.61
Summit, Village	Waukesha	\$	9,263.14	\$	7,483.81
Waukesha County Sheriff's Dept.	Waukesha	\$	29,837.20	\$	14,824.81
Waupaca County Sheriff's Dept.	Waupaca	\$	48,928.43	\$	35,228.26

Coloma, Town	Waushara	\$	-	\$	2,562.20
Deerfield, Town (Deerfield/Hancock)	Waushara	\$	6,691.31	\$	5,266.99
Marion, Town	Waushara	\$	5,235.16	\$	5,794.89
Winnebago County Sheriff's Dept.	Winnebago	\$	49,931.13	\$	60,931.32
Wood County Sheriff's Dept.	Wood	\$	5,327.07	\$	3,291.64

Totals

\$	2,122,000.00	\$	2,062,500.00
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48 counties



Assembly Committee on Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation

2021 Assembly Bill 766

Boating Enforcement Aids and Making an Appropriation

February 2, 2022

Good morning Chair Mursau and members of the Committee. My name is Darren Kuhn, and I am the Boating Law Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Assembly Bill 766, related to boating enforcement aids.

Wisconsin has approximately 100 county and municipal boat patrols that annually seek reimbursement from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their recreational boating safety activities. The number of patrols seeking reimbursement varies minimally from year to year depending on each agency's internal factors. For example, in 2019, 104 agencies filed reimbursement claims totaling 52,707 hours of recreational boating activities, while in 2020, 105 agencies filed reimbursement claims reporting 54,729 hours of recreational boating activities.

These water patrols are an essential asset to the DNR boating program. They supplement time, effort, staff, equipment, public education, law enforcement and emergency response in their respective jurisdictions. Ultimately, these municipal boat patrols are a force multiplier and increase the public's safety on Wisconsin's waterways. In many situations these patrols are the first on scene to emergency situations because their individual agencies are receiving calls for help via their 911 systems and can begin mobilizing immediately, while the local conservation warden is receiving the call from the dispatch center.

Under current law, local agencies can be reimbursed at 75 percent of their related costs and the total amount disbursed by the department is limited to \$1,766,600. These funds come from the revenues generated by boat registration fees. Given the current number of boat patrols seeking reimbursement, the spending cap does not provide enough funding for the department to reimburse the entirety of the 75 percent that the local agencies are able to request. To ensure that these agencies are reimbursed to the maximum amount allowable, the DNR supplements the boat registration funds with US Coast Guard Recreational Boating Grant funds that the department receives annually. In 2019 the department used \$676,500 of federal funds and in 2020 the department used \$672,799 of federal grant funds for municipal boat patrols.

This bill would increase the reimbursement rate from 75 percent to 80 percent and increase the allowable spending by \$545,000, making \$2,311,600 available annually to reimburse municipal boat patrols. This increased funding would come from the boat registration fund. The boat registration fund can sustain this funding increase without the need for any fee increases for users.

The additional funding for municipal water patrols would allow the DNR to reallocate the federal grant funds that have been used to reimburse the municipal water patrols. This would allow the department to strengthen the boating program through increased boating education, staff training, equipment purchases, and emergency response.

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.

GENEVA LAKE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Reference: 2021 Assembly Bill 766

Dear Representative Loudenbeck,

I fully support Assembly Bill 766 that increases the reimbursement percentage to 80% for Water Safety Patrol Units.

Geneva Lake Law Enforcement (GLLEA) is unique in nature from most Water Safety Patrol Units, as we are a standalone department. We are supported by 4 municipalities (City of Lake Geneva, Linn Township, Village of Fontana, and Village of Williams Bay) who contribute to our operational budget. GLLEA is funded in addition to their own Police Departments.

This results in many of our budget items to only be partially reimbursed from the DNR, such as rent (6 months), and phones (6 months). Other critical items such as DOJ related certification training, computers, computer related, new hire drug screens, body cameras, ammunition and many other listed on page 9 of the Municipal Water Safety Patrol Manual are not reimbursed at all.

The increase to 80% will assist in budget expenditures from our supporting governmental bodies.

I ask you and other Representatives to support and pass Bill 766.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hausner

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