



---

# HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

October 19, 2021

## Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues

### Testimony on Senate Bills (SB) 610, 613, 615, 616 and 617

Good morning!

Thank you Chair Stafsholt and committee members for hearing the Sporting Freedom package of bills to preserve and enhance Wisconsin's sporting heritage for hunters and sportsmen and sportswomen.

As a lifelong hunter, I am proud to be the lead author of five of these proposals. My bills simplify turkey hunting regulations, seek to reduce the number of different types of hunting licenses offered in WI, share more information about public land access, clear obstacles for dog trainers and encourage partnerships for sport fish stocking in lakes and streams.

**Turkey Hunting Simplification Bill (SB 610)** – This bill would modify administrative rules relating to the hunting of wild turkeys to combine hunting zones and seasons to just two zones and two seasons (down from the complicated and restrictive six seasons that makes it difficult for many hunters to participate), and to modify youth hunting restrictions.

The spring turkey hunting season starts in mid-April, with the youth hunt on April 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> this year. On opening day of the regular season, April 21, 2021, there was a snow storm across portions of southern Wisconsin. The application for a turkey permit is due December 10 of the prior year. Unpredictable weather in April and May, can discourage youth hunters who have been looking forward to the hunt.

**DNR Hunting License Categories Simplification Bill (SB 613)** – This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies ways to consolidate or eliminate hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses to reduce the total number of types of licenses DNR is required to issue.

Currently there are over 20 categories of hunting and trapping license approvals, five special species stamps, and at least 12 different fishing licenses. Additionally, there are first time licenses for youth, disabled, spousal or mentored hunts. Hunters and anglers want to ethically participate in the sport, but could be left wondering if they have the proper license or tag for the season or the equipment that they are using?

**DNR Public Lands Access Report Bill (SB 615)** – This bill would require the DNR to prepare a report that identifies public access opportunities on all lands owned or managed by DNR, land

acquired under the Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson stewardship program, and open managed forest lands.

Guidance from the legislature has been to increase access to lands funded by public dollars. Over the past decade additional emphasis included providing vehicular access on established roads. An aging hunting population often finds these roads gated and blocked providing inadequate access.

**Dog Training Bill (SB 616)** – This bill would require the DNR to make available on the Go Wild website dog training licenses. Currently, this license is not available there and that makes it harder for hunters to comply.

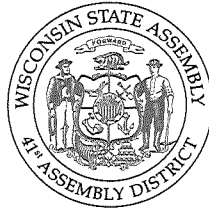
During the pandemic, many DNR Service Centers were closed, and counter service was restricted. This required hunters to mail a paper application for dog training licenses, allowing one to two weeks for processing. There is no justification for not making the application and permits available on the Go Wild system with all of the other hunting and fishing licenses.

**Aquaculture Partnership Bill (SB 617)** – This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources 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.

Public-private partnerships can take advantage of the aquaculture expertise that exists in Wisconsin. The successful Walleye Initiative can be used as a model to partner with private fish farms to stock popular game fish and increase angling opportunities and enhance native fish populations.

Thank you again to the chairman and committee for holding this hearing. This package of legislation is about simplifying the DNR rules and regulations, so whether you're a seasoned hunter, angler or new to the sport, you can be sure that you purchased the right licenses, permits or tags to be part of the sporting culture in Wisconsin.

The Sporting Freedom package of bills is very timely as hunters return to the fields, set-up their stands and harvest wild game all over Wisconsin. I am proud to be a part of this effort to protect and defend our sporting freedoms and heritage. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this legislation.



---

# ALEX A. DALLMAN

---

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 41<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## Testimony in favor of Senate Bill 617

*Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues*

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Stafsholt and committee members, for allowing me to testify before you concerning Senate Bill 617, 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 617 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 Stafsholt, for the opportunity to testify before this committee today and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



## Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, and Rural Issues

### *2021 Senate Bill 617*

#### *Report on Partnering with the Private Aquaculture Industry*

*October 19, 2021*

Good morning Chair Stafsholt 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. Joining me today to assist with questions is Meredith Penthorn, Policy Specialist. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 617 (SB 617), 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. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.