



MARY FELZKOWSKI

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

Testimony for SB 105

Senator Mary Felzkowski

Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon Chairman Cowles and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 105, which will allow snowmobile clubs to establish signs that advertise nearby businesses on snowmobile trails.

Snowmobiling is one of the most popular winter sports in Wisconsin, and is enjoyed by thousands of residents and out-of-state visitors each year. To accommodate these riders, hundreds of miles of trails are made available, cutting through both public and private property. At many of the intersections of these trails are signs directing snowmobilers to businesses providing fuel, food, repair services, and lodging. I personally have been snowmobiling my whole life, have spent countless hours on those trails, and let me tell you, one of the most vital resources when it's freezing cold and snowing are those trail signs!

While snowmobile trail signs are well utilized by riders throughout the winter months, the DNR has taken it upon themselves to dismantle these signs, citing NR 45.04 (3)(f)1 which prohibits advertising of private businesses on state land. This action has not gone unnoticed though, as these signs are utilized for the safety of snowmobilers of every level. For riders like myself who have been using these trails for years, these signs act as landmarks, letting us know exactly where we are. And for those who are new, these signs can absolutely be lifesavers, guiding them to warm shelter, fuel, food, and lodging when the temperatures drop and the sun goes down. Most importantly, however, these signs have been used in the past as a way for riders to guide emergency services to their location when an accident occurs on the trails, as businesses described on these signs can help to significantly narrow down a search radius. In the dead of winter, every second counts.

SB 105 will allow the DNR to create agreements with local snowmobile clubs, providing these organizations with the ability to put up signs on public trails. These signs, which will only be able to advertise snowmobile-accessible businesses that offer fuel, food, vehicle servicing, and lodging, will have specific requirements pertaining to location placement and sign construction, ensuring uniformity throughout the state. This bill also specifies that the Department won't be able to charge snowmobile clubs to place signs on trails.

Passage of this bill is a matter of public safety, as these signs will give snowmobilers waypoints in the cold, directions to safe locations in the dark, and landmarks for emergency services to find injured riders.

I am grateful to my Assembly author, Representative Green, for his assistance with this legislation. Thank you for your time today, and thank you for your consideration of this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.

March 15, 2023

Testimony on Senate Bill 105
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

Thank you, Chairman Cowles and committee members, for having a hearing today on Senate Bill 105 relating to signs along snowmobile trails that advertise nearby businesses.

Snowmobiling is a big part of the 74th district and is enjoyed by residents and tourists every year during the winter. To accommodate these riders, hundreds of miles of trails have been cleared and are prepared every year, cutting through both public and private property, and often with stops along the way to allow for refueling, food, repairs, and shelter from the elements.

Over the past couple of years, the DNR has begun to dismantle these signs, citing NR 45.05(3)(f)1, which prohibits advertising of private businesses on state land. The DNR's portrayal of these signs as 'an inconvenience' for snowmobilers is nonsense. These signs matter when it comes to public safety since these directional signs are used by both riders and local emergency services as landmarks and indicators of location on the trails. These signs will guide snowmobilers to refueling, food, repair, and shelter to protect from extreme elements.

As a bar owner, I see snowmobiling as having a huge economic impact for all parts of Northern Wisconsin. Having these signs that advertise these local businesses is detrimental to the success of businesses in the winter months.

Senate Bill 105 will allow the DNR to create agreements with local snowmobile clubs, providing these organizations with the ability to put up signs on public trails. The signs will only be able to advertise snowmobile-accessible businesses that offer fuel, food, vehicle servicing, and lodging. Lastly, the bill also specifies that the Department won't be able to charge snowmobile clubs to place signs on trails.

It is important to pass this bill to ensure the public safety of snowmobile riders within the state of Wisconsin and to ensure the safety of tourists that come to Northern Wisconsin.

I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate on this bill with my colleague from the Senate, Senator Felzkowski. Thank you for your time today, and thank you for your consideration of this bill.



Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

2023 Senate Bill 105

Signs Along Snowmobile Trails that Advertise Nearby Businesses

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Chair Cowles and members of the Committee. My name is Brigit Brown, and I am the recreation management supervisor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 105, related to signs along snowmobile trails that advertise nearby businesses.

Senate Bill 105 would provide a way for snowmobile clubs to erect advertising signs on state lands and advertise for local businesses on those signs. Historically, the DNR has allowed signage providing basic information about goods and services relevant to snowmobiles that are accessible by snowmobile trails and routes. This basic information includes the type of good or service provided, such as gas, food, or lodging, the distance to the business, and an arrow indicating direction of the business. This signage is allowed with the land use agreements the department enters into with local snowmobile clubs across the state.

While the department already has the ability to enter into agreements to allow such signage on department properties, other laws and policies come into play when advertising specific business names on state public lands. Specifically, state purchasing rules, which are under the authority of the Department of Administration (DOA) and expressed in state statute and in policy such as the State Procurement Manual.

While the bill exempts the snowmobile clubs from DOA procurement procedures when they advertise on signs for local businesses, the bill is missing a cross reference that would exempt agreements between the DNR and snowmobile clubs from the DOA procurement procedures. Without this exemption, the department may still be required to competitively bid contracts for erecting the signage. The authors could also consider requiring that snowmobile signs be removed at the end of the season. These signs advertise for businesses that are accessible via snowmobile routes, so having signs up in the summer could be confusing for trail users and could lead to inadvertent trespass violations. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the authors on potential drafting solutions to address these concerns.

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.



Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs – AWSC

529 Trail Side Dr., Suite 100 – DeForest, WI 53532
Phone: 800.232.4108 / 608.846.5530 – Fax: 608.846.5534
Web: www.awsc.org / Email: awsc@awsc.org

To: Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Energy

From: Dave Newman, AWSC President

Re: AWSC Support of Senate Bill 105

Date: March 15, 2023

Mr. Chairman Cowles and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before this Committee. I am here today to speak in support of SB 105.

As president of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs, I am here representing our 41,000 members and the 603 snowmobile clubs in the state. It is these clubs and their volunteer members that are responsible for developing and maintaining most of the nearly 25,000 miles of interconnecting snowmobile trails across Wisconsin, which are all open to the public.

This bill allows snowmobile clubs who maintain sections of trails located on DNR property to place guide signs that include the names of business. This is something that has always been allowed at intersections for trails located on private property and snowmobilers expect to see them on all trails. Current rules in NR 50.04 prohibits posting signs or advertising matter without being authorized by contractual agreement. According to DNR attorneys, this could only be done through procurement rules and a bidding process.

Signs are important to snowmobile riders looking for services they need when riding the trails. Signs are used as a wayfinding tool and help snowmobilers navigate the trail system safely. Many of these businesses are known as landmarks to snowmobilers. Snowmobilers can know where they are located on the trail system by recognizing the name of local businesses. The names of these businesses are also on the maps we use to navigate the trails.

Knowing where one is located on a trail by recognizing the name of a business can become a safety issue when lost or low on gas. When riding with your family, it may be important to know where to find a place to warm up or a bathroom to use. When riding in a strange area or after

dark, seeing a sign that directs them to a resort or lodge where they are staying can be very reassuring.

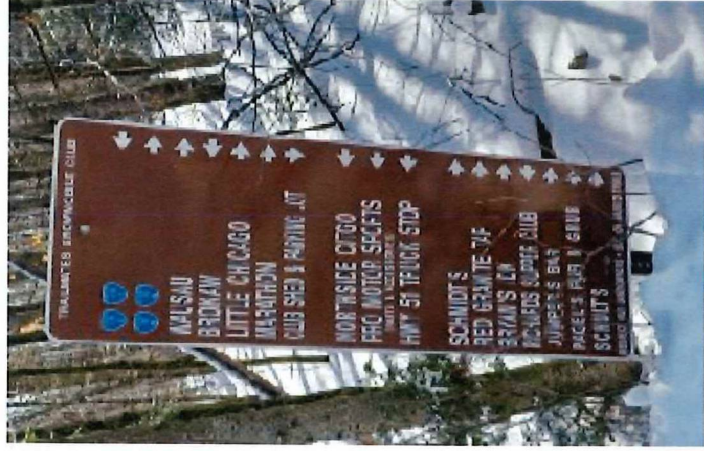
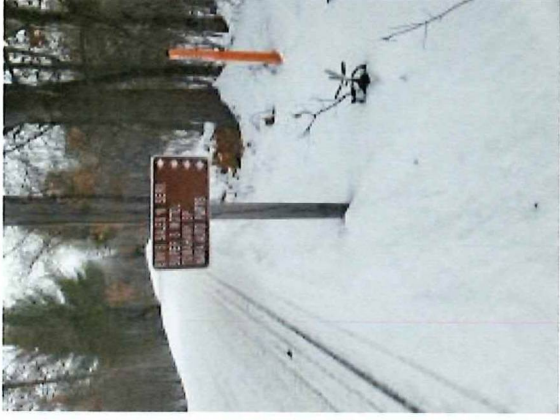
When we talk about signs with business names, we aren't talking about large billboards with flashing lights. We are just informing snowmobilers of the location of businesses that are important to them. These signs will have to meet the criteria for all guide signs found in the snowmobile trail signing guidelines and in NR 50. According to the guidance provided, guide signs are required to be brown with white lettering. I have attached pictures to my testimony showing examples of signs and the signing guidelines.

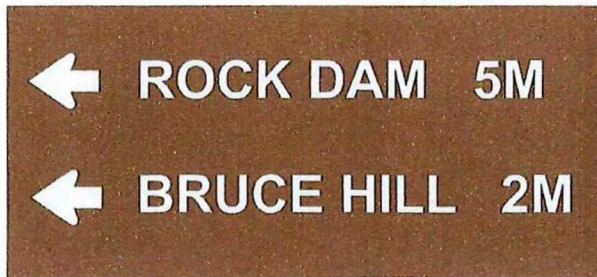
These signs will only be posted on trails located on DNR property by snowmobile clubs at intersections with other snowmobile trails. And they will only be allowed to include businesses that are accessible by snowmobile and provide necessary services of fuel, food, lodging and repair services. These intersecting trails are unique to snowmobiling and most are located on private property and are part of the interconnecting statewide trail system. These signs would be removed at the end of snowmobile season by the local snowmobile club, so other users are not directed on to private property. The business being identified on the sign, are those who support the local club by advertising on their county snowmobile map. I have also included an attachment to my testimony of pictures of trail maps showing intersecting trails.

Many of these trails on DNR property already have signs installed by local clubs because current law hasn't been consistently enforced. This bill provides the process for those signs to become compliant.

We want to thank Sen. Felzkowski and Rep. Green for sponsoring this bill.

We hope to receive the support of this committee to move this legislation forward and we would be happy to take any questions.





Size Variable
2" Upper Case Letters Minimum



Size Variable
2" Upper Case Letters Minimum



Typically
9" x 9"

Guide Signs

Guide signs are used to direct the rider to a destination on the trail. They should be placed at decision points along the trail such as intersections and trailheads. These signs must have a reflectorized white legend on a brown background. When indicated, mileage figures should be calculated as accurately as possible to the nearest mile. Arrows used to show direction on these signs may point in any direction.

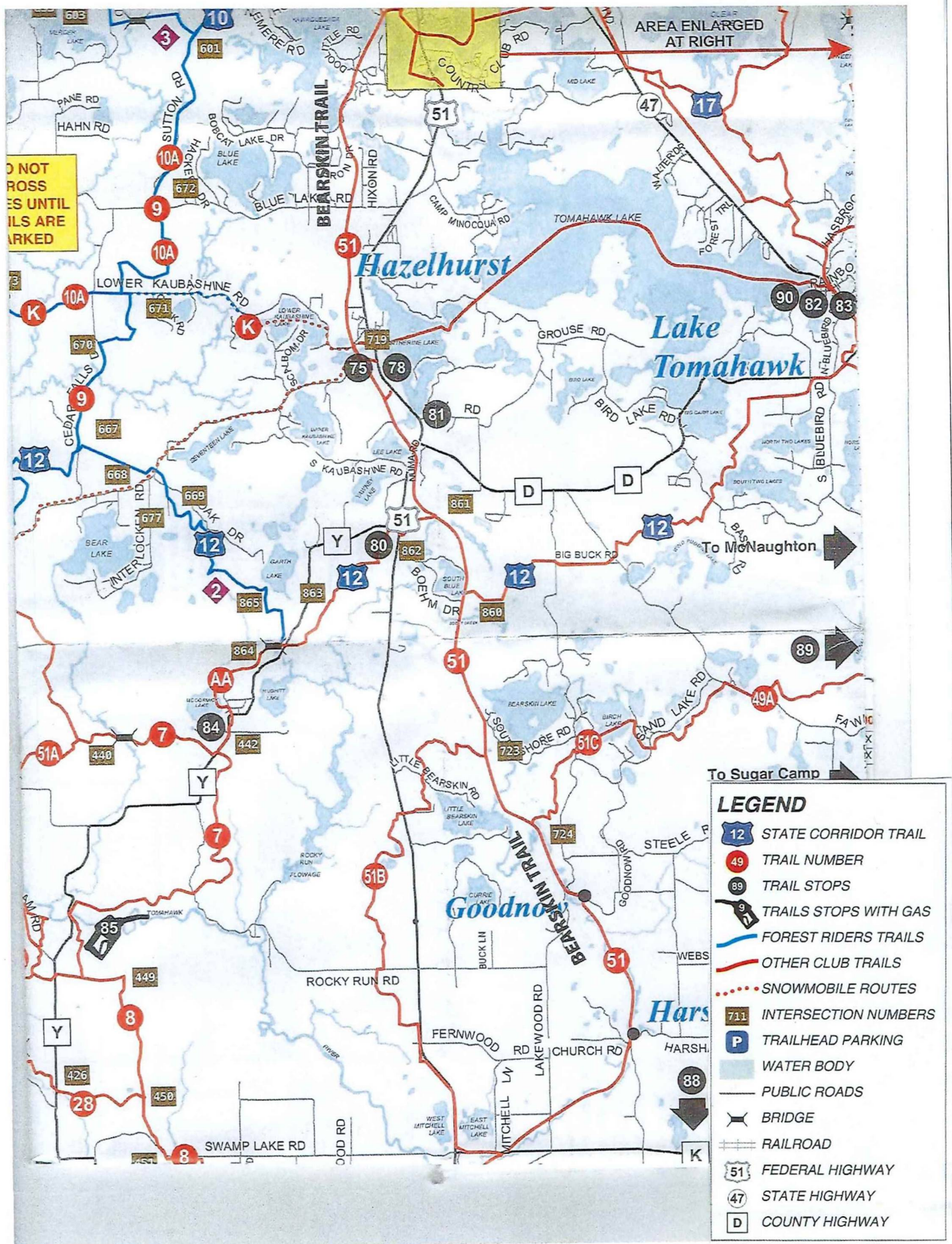
The use of guide signs to direct trail users to gas stations, resorts, restaurants and other trailside businesses is helpful, but the number of signs for this purpose should be kept reasonable.

Informational Signs

Informational signs are used to furnish information to the rider about trails, facilities or road crossings. Also, streams and other geographic features can be named as a matter of interest and help in establishing location.

The standard colors for the sign are a white legend on a brown background. Reflectorization of informational signs is encouraged, but not required. Where the county has a standard color scheme for informational signs in county parks that differ from the white on brown color scheme, that county's color scheme may be adapted for trail information or guide signing purposes. A trail signing technique growing in popularity is the use of informational signs that identify numbered trail intersections.

NOTE: Signs that depict symbols related to alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden on state-owned properties.



DO NOT CROSS UNTIL TRAILS ARE MARKED

AREA ENLARGED AT RIGHT

Hazelhurst

Lake Tomahawk

Goodno

Hars

To Sugar Camp

- LEGEND**
- 12 STATE CORRIDOR TRAIL
 - 49 TRAIL NUMBER
 - 89 TRAIL STOPS
 - 9 TRAILS STOPS WITH GAS
 - FOREST RIDERS TRAILS
 - OTHER CLUB TRAILS
 - SNOWMOBILE ROUTES
 - 711 INTERSECTION NUMBERS
 - P TRAILHEAD PARKING
 - WATER BODY
 - PUBLIC ROADS
 - BRIDGE
 - RAILROAD
 - 51 FEDERAL HIGHWAY
 - 47 STATE HIGHWAY
 - D COUNTY HIGHWAY