

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Senate Journal
Ninety–Eighth Regular Session

WEDNESDAY, May 23, 2007

The Chief Clerk makes the following entries under the above date.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

**State of Wisconsin
Senate**

May 23, 2007

The Honorable, the Senate:

Pursuant to Senate Rule 20 (2) (a), I have made the following appointments to the Special Committee on Oversight of Senate Broadcasting: Senators Robson, Kreitlow and Erpenbach.

The committee was established to monitor and review the operation of Article IV of the License Agreement between WisconsinEye and the State of Wisconsin. No later than October 26, 2007, the committee shall report to the Committee on Senate Organization its findings with regard to the operation of Article IV of the License Agreement and any changes to the License Agreement that the committee recommends the Committee on Senate Organization implement.

With regard to members of the minority party, appointments are made based on nominations by the Minority Leader.

Sincerely,
JUDITH B. ROBSON
Senate Majority Leader

**State of Wisconsin
Legislative Audit Bureau**

May 22, 2007

The Honorable, The Legislature:

As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we have completed an evaluation of wetland regulatory programs administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In fiscal year 2005–06, estimated expenditures for wetland regulatory activities—including permitting, enforcement, and mapping—totaled \$1.75 million, including \$1.43 million in

salaries and fringe benefits for an estimated 19.3 full–time equivalent employees.

Most projects that disturb wetlands require approval from both DNR and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. From January 2001 through June 2006, DNR approved 3,582 permits, or 82.6 percent of the applications it received. However, the process is complicated and requires frequent communication with applicants. Although DNR generally issued permits within 120 days, as required by statute, 282 decisions took longer than one year from when the application was received.

Other states differ in the manner and extent to which they regulate wetlands. For example, local governments, rather than state agencies, approve permits for activities that disturb wetlands in Minnesota. Further, most midwestern states require compensation for permitted wetland losses, although Wisconsin does not. As a result, DNR approved only 52 compensatory mitigation projects from February 2002 through June 2006.

We make recommendations to simplify the permitting process and improve program management, including establishing categories of general permits, providing additional guidance to applicants, improving coordination with federal agencies, and tracking permitted wetland losses. We also include recommendations for DNR to report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by December 31, 2007, with options for increasing the use of mitigation banking, eliminating duplicative state and federal permits, and improving its wetland maps.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by DNR and other state and federal agencies. DNR’s response follows the appendices.

Sincerely,
JANICE MUELLER
State Auditor

Pursuant to Senate Rule 17 (5), Representative Molepske is withdrawn as a cosponsor of **Senate Bill 181**.