

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE

March 29, 2024

Respectfully submitted,
TONY EVERS
Governor

To the Honorable Members of the Assembly:

I am vetoing **Assembly Bill 1030** in its entirety.

This bill would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources from establishing an antlerless-only deer hunting season in the northern forest deer management zone and from issuing hunting authorizations for antlerless deer in the northern forest deer management zone. Any authorization that the department issues for a deer-hunting season in the northern forest deer management zone that is open only to hunters under the age of 16 may only authorize the killing of one deer, which may be antlered or antlerless. The bill also prohibits the department from issuing more than one authorization for an antlered deer in the northern forest deer management zone during an open season for hunting deer with a bow and arrow or crossbow, or from issuing more than one authorization during an open season for hunting deer with a muzzle-loading firearm or a firearm. These provisions would be in effect for four years.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to circumventing the established County Deer Advisory Council process, which provides opportunities for public input on proposed deer population estimates and harvest quotas. The councils may recommend a bucks-only season based on population estimates and feedback from the public. Many deer management units have successfully implemented bucks-only hunts in recent years due to concerns over low deer population estimates.

I am also vetoing this bill because I object to limiting the ability of the Department of Natural Resources and other public and private landowners to respond to local deer population levels. Deer distribution varies across the northern forest zone and effective management requires a variety of solutions to address locally overabundant deer populations. This bill would limit flexibility for landowners to address issues on their properties that may be influenced by unique habitat factors.

Balancing the goal of providing hunters with successful hunting experiences and ensuring healthy forest habitats in Northern Wisconsin requires both collaboration and the flexibility to address challenges as they arise. The one-size-fits-all solution proposed in this bill does not strike this balance, as it limits property owners from making decisions to best manage their land and disregards public input provided via County Deer Advisory Councils.