



# MARY CZAJA

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 35<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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**Assembly Bill 194 – Crossbow Hunting and Licensing in Wisconsin**  
**Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage**  
**Testimony by State Rep. Mary Czaja**  
**May 22, 2013**

Thank you, Chairman Ott and members of the Natural Resources Committee for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 194 today.

The goal of AB 194 is to grow hunting opportunities in the state of Wisconsin, by allowing for the expanded use of a crossbow. AB 194 would lift the current age and disability restrictions, and establish both a separate season and separate license for crossbow use. This would follow a growing trend nationwide, where 19 other states already allow for the expanded use of crossbows, including our neighboring state of Michigan.

As many of you know, the use of crossbows is not a new debate in the hunting community. This is a conversation that has been occurring over many years, and it inspires strong feelings on all sides. I truly believe every group and individual involved in the writing of this bill came to the table with good intent, and we worked towards a common goal. I have bow hunted in the past, and I have a deep appreciation for the skill and dedication that the sport requires. Bow hunting will always be a time-honored tradition and a popular sport in our state. However, in recent years overall hunting in Wisconsin has been on a downward trend and we need to do everything we can to encourage new people to the sport and to adjust to changing demographics of the hunting population.

The goal of AB 194 is to retain and recruit past, current, and future hunters. Many of you are familiar with the research conducted several years ago by the Families Afield group, comprised of the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. The groups banded together to study the future of hunting, particularly the impact that youth hunting has nationwide.

The results showed that Wisconsin was in the bottom 20% nationwide for attracting new hunters, and our Hunter Replacement Rate stood at only .53%. This means that for every hunter who leaves the sport – whether due to age, lifestyle change, or another reason – there is not a new hunter to take their place. This was one of the driving forces behind the Mentored Hunting legislation that passed two sessions ago, and has been met with success.

Expanding the use of crossbows is another opportunity to address that drop-off trend and to pass on the hunting legacy to future generations. Additionally, research conducted by the Aging Department at UW-Madison shows the aging trend of Wisconsin's population that will occur over the next decade, as more and more of the Baby Boomer generation enter retirement years. In fact, the research showed that since the year 2000, the overall age of population had increased in 70 out of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

This is especially true in the northern areas of Wisconsin, where a significant portion of the population are retirees who have chosen to live there and still pursue their recreational activities. As the physical strength of these older hunters declines due to age, the use of a crossbow would allow them an additional option to stay active and in the woods. Ultimately, it is a question of confidence and the ability to enjoy the hunting experience.

As mentioned earlier, under AB 194 Wisconsin would join 19 other states that currently allow for expanded crossbow use. This is up from just 3 states that allowed for crossbow use in 1994. One of the closest comparative states in terms of geography and hunting opportunities is Michigan. In 2009, Michigan opened their traditional archery season to include the use of crossbows. Earlier this year, a report was conducted by the Michigan DNR to evaluate the impact of the first three years. The report showed an increase in participation and new hunters to the sport, and no significant impact on the deer harvest numbers.

I understand there are concerns about the impact that crossbows would have on the harvest rate of Wisconsin's deer herd. I and the other authors have met extensively with the DNR and other interested groups to address that concern and other questions. After many hours of discussion and listening, the result was this compromise bill, AB 194. The separate license will allow for data collection and accurate studies on the impact of crossbows on harvest rates.

Expanding the use of crossbows also brings a considerable economic impact to our state. The DNR has prepared a fiscal estimate on AB 194, which indicates over \$60,000 combined of savings and new revenue. Representative Danou and I have supplied you with a packet of emails that we received from bow manufacturers and archery retailers, stating their full support for AB 194. Depending on the amount of licenses sold, there is the potential for even more conservation dollars generated and the ripple effect of spending that hunters bring to transportation, lodging, and other hospitality.

This bill is bipartisan – it has a Republican and Democratic co-author in both the Assembly and Senate, and nearly 3 dozen of our legislative colleagues have also signed on to support the bill.

Ultimately, as hunters and stewards of Wisconsin's natural resources, we should all have a common goal: to help preserve Wisconsin's cherished hunting heritage for future generations and to retain and recruit past, current, and future hunters. I believe all those who wish to enjoy our woods should have an opportunity to do so.

Thank you.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**CHRIS DANOU**

**WISCONSIN STATE ASSEMBLY**

**92nd DISTRICT**

**Testimony on Assembly Bill 194  
Crossbow Hunting and Licensing in Wisconsin  
Assembly Committee on Natural Resources & Sporting Heritage  
May 22, 2013**

Chairman Ott and Members of the Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage:

Thank you for holding a hearing today on Assembly Bill 194/Senate Bill 185 a bi-partisan bill, which would designate the authority to hunt certain animals with a crossbow and establish open seasons for hunting with a crossbow.

As you know, hunting is a great tradition and an important part of Wisconsin's culture. Unfortunately, especially in recent years, we have seen a substantial decrease in the number of new hunters joining in this cherished tradition. Knowing this decrease is taking place, we as legislators are in a position to craft state policy that will encourage more individuals to not only take up hunting, but also retain those who are currently engaged in the sport.

This bill seeks to do just that. By allowing the use of a crossbow, we will open up opportunities for those who would traditionally be unable or unwilling to hunt during the archery season. This will give those who are physically unable a chance to participate as well as those who see an opportunity to increase their time in the woods. Either way, this bill encourages more men, women and children from all kinds of backgrounds in communities across Wisconsin to hunt.

Not only does the inclusion of crossbows create more hunting opportunities, it will also result in additional opportunities for Wisconsin businesses from the retail to manufacturing levels. It is also anticipated that with more hunters in the woods, there will also be a greater exchange of commerce as people travel and spend time in communities across our state. According to fiscal estimates from the DNR, the State of Wisconsin will realize \$60,000 in savings and revenue increases if this bill becomes law. Further, this bill will also simplify the regulations that govern the use of crossbows while hunting.

As a trained wildlife biologist and avid hunter, I understand that hunting is an important management tool for Wisconsin's game populations. I also recognize that the vast majority of archery and crossbow hunting in Wisconsin will be orientated toward the hunting of white-tail deer. When thinking about creating new opportunities to hunt, the question I always ask myself, in addition to the pleasure hunting brings and the ability to interact with the natural world: is the new technique or season that is being created consistent with the traditions of the public trust and fair chase?

Allowing crossbows to be used alongside traditional archery – ranging from the most primitive long bows to the most advanced composite compound bows – meets the criteria of public trust and fair chase.

We have an opportunity to get more people out hunting and enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors. I firmly believe this bill does just that in a fair, reasonable and common-sense fashion.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and I look forward to answering any questions you may have at this time.

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**Watts, Sara**

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**From:** Jon DuMars <jdumars@mathewsinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 21, 2013 12:19 PM  
**To:** Rep.Danou  
**Subject:** Assembly Bill 194

As a leading Wisconsin manufacturer, we are prepared to meet fluctuating consumer demand that is present in our industry.

Mission Archery  
919 River Road  
Sparta, WI 54656  
[www.missionarchery.com](http://www.missionarchery.com)

**Watts, Sara**

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**From:** Jeff Adee <JADEE@prent.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 14, 2013 3:55 PM  
**To:** Rep.OttJ; Rep.Czaja; Rep.Danou; Sen.Kedzie; Sen.Moulton; Sen.Miller  
**Cc:** Brad Adee; Brian Adee; jeff@headhunterbowstrings.com  
**Subject:** AB 194

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I respectfully ask you to support the passage of AB 194 because of all the positive effects it will present to myself and all hunters in WI with additional hunting opportunities. My brothers and I also own a company that is the largest supplier of bowstrings in the world. This legislation will add jobs for my company as well as the cross bow manufacturers. We have added 10 jobs since February 1, 2013 in Milton, WI and will add another 10 jobs in the next 3 months. This legislation will allow us to continue to add even more jobs. There are many other archery manufacturers and dealers in the state of Wisconsin that will positively be affected as well.

**Thanks,**

**Jeff Adee**  
President  
Headhunter Bow Strings  
[www.Headhunterbowstrings.com](http://www.Headhunterbowstrings.com)

Watts, Sara

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**From:** Greg Andrews <andrews.archery@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2013 7:17 PM  
**To:** Rep.Danou  
**Subject:** AB 194

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Chris,

As a constituent in your district I respectfully ask that you support Assembly Bill 194. I am a strong supporter of you and our party. I see this bill as non-partisan and we need more issues where we can reach consensus. I truly believe this is one of them. As an avid bowhunter I believe there are far more positives to the bill for the majority of sportsmen and sportswomen. We need more opportunities for youth, women and the aging traditional sportsperson, not less. As full disclosure I also own and operate Andrews Archery. It's a small business located in Pierce County. Over the past year I have been informally asking my customers their opinion on X-Bow use during the Archery Season and my survey finds that 75% or more are aok with it, even the most traditionalists customers. I have been selling crossbows for 10 years and that segment has been steady but flat. If we can boost that part of our business I surely could/would add to our staff of employees.

Many Thanks Chris,  
Greg Andrews  
Andrews Archery  
Bay City, WI

Watts, Sara

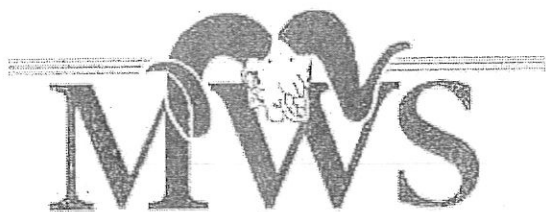
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**From:** john volkman <johnvolkman@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2013 6:57 AM  
**To:** Rep.Danou  
**Subject:** AB194 xbow bill

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Mr Danou, My name is John Volkman. I wanted to give you my endorsement for the new Xbow bill. I have been in the sporting goods industry for over 20 years at both the retail level including the last 12 years as a manufacturers sales rep covering Wi. The majority of my income is derived from sales related to deer hunting, specifically archers. Most of my products are directly related to compound or vertical bows. I believe the xbow bill is a positive move for the wi sporting goods industry and the hunting tradition in general. I have heard from many, many dealers who are all for this bill. It is completed in time for this fall it would bring immediate benefits to these retailers. i have heard rumblings from some detractors that the dealers need "time" to get stocked up. This is simply not true, manufacturers and dealers can get product almost immediately, and a big boost in sales would follow. I see no reason to delay this bill. I appreciate you consideration, feel free to contact me with any questions at my contact info below, sincerely John Volkman

John Volkman  
[john@mws-reps.com](mailto:john@mws-reps.com)  
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8498 maple lane  
brussels wi 54204  
920.470.4039



Mike Wieck Sales, Inc.  
Manufacturers Representative



**Watts, Sara**

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**From:** khre tds.net <khre@tds.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 20, 2013 9:41 AM  
**To:** Rep.Czaja; Rep.Danou; Rep.OttJ; Sen.Kedzie; Sen.Moulton; Sen.Miller  
**Subject:** AB 194

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Legislators,

I strongly urge you to support Assembly Bill 194 which establishes the right and opportunity for hunters of all ages in Wisconsin to utilize a crossbow for hunting. The crossbow is a piece of archery equipment with a history that is thousands of years in the making. With the advances in the design and construction of compound bows, the crossbow no longer carries an advantage in speed or accuracy.

I am a DNR certified instructor for the Hunter Education Program. One of the issues we face is that fewer young people are choosing to continue Wisconsin's great tradition of hunting. Restricting the means that are available to individuals to exercise that great tradition is a significant part of the problem.

Please support the rights of all hunters to have access to the tools that let them experience one of Wisconsin's greatest traditions. Please support AB 194.

Thank you.

Ken Heim  
2679 Fahey Glen  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
608-288-8283

May 17, 2013

Re: Assembly Bill 194/ Please vote yes

The Honorable Chris Danou  
Room 317 North  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Danou,

Please look at the photograph enclosed with this letter. This is Amber Schofield, a 10 year old girl with Joubert's Syndrome, a muscle condition which limits her mobility. She is among several young people who received crossbows donated by the Wisconsin Crossbow Federation so she could take part in a 4-H archery program. Her condition was brought to our attention by Conservation Warden Deeney, of Chippewa County who believed that a youth crossbow could be a reasonable accommodation for Amber's condition.

Amber is just one example of why I support the legalization of crossbows during the archery season. Today, her involvement may only be to share an outdoor activity with her friends, but should she want to use a crossbow during the archery season, she will soon find, because of her condition, her treatment is anything but equal.

Amber's friends need only buy an archery license, but she will have to obtain a special medical exemption application and then take expensive tests by an orthopedic specialist to insure she is "handicapped enough" to get an exemption. These tests run anywhere from \$200 to over a thousand dollars, depending if the doctor wants the applicant to take physical therapy to see if the condition *will improve*. Depending on the type of exemption given, she may have to repeat the tests in five years. Most insurance companies will not pay for these tests because these tests are not treatment. Every year handicapped applicants have to pay over six hundred thousand dollars more to take advantage of an opportunity non-handicapped individuals take for granted.

People with physical issues, and full handicaps are the largest single minority group in the United States. Most people sooner or later, become members of this group. As we age we loose strength and other physical abilities which force us out of activities we enjoyed while we were young. When we graph archery participation, we notice at about age thirty seven, participation begins to drop, and by age fifty-five that decline rapidly increases.

There are now twenty-two states which allow full inclusion of crossbows and draw-loc type devices during the archery season. Some of these states have had these laws for over twenty years. What is known from data obtained from these states is:

- \* Older people can stay involved in archery because they can switch to crossbows where less strength and physical dexterity is required.
- \* Younger people can get involved in archery earlier because they don't need great strength to use crossbows. While thirty pound bows are legal in Wisconsin, we believe such bows are more likely to wound, than humanely harvest game.
- \* Archers who have less time to practice are more likely to have humane kills if they use crossbows because they can place their arrows with greater precision.
- \* Women are the fastest growing segment of the archery community. Because women statically have less upper body strength than men, crossbows are a logical solution.
- \* Crossbow use does not harm the resource, and states with liberal crossbows laws generate more revenue from license fees, Pittman Robertson funds, sales tax, and revenue generated by 'recreational days' spent in their state.

As the founder and former president of the Wisconsin Crossbow Federation I have been working many years for rational hunting regulations which allow crossbow use for everyone who wishes to use them. I am a strong believer in letting the individual choose what is best for them, rather than having the state regulate such matters.

The WCF is now under the able management of Alan Schimelpfenig. I support his decision to compromise on the issue of separate tags for crossbows in order to get crossbows approved for the archery season, although I personally would prefer a clean bill which does not require a separate crossbow license. It is my understanding the Governor would also like to see regulation simplified, not made more complex.

As a Wisconsin resident for over forty years, I am going to miss this beautiful state and all the wonderful people I have come to know.

Thank you for the work you do to make Wisconsin an even better state.

Sincerely,



John Cumming  
President, Minnesota Crossbow Federation  
22839 E. Lake Hubert Drive  
Brainerd, MN 56401  
262 893 2700 johnjcumming@gmail.com



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

*Terry C. Anderson, Director*  
*Laura D. Rose, Deputy Director*

TO: REPRESENTATIVE MARY CZAJA

FROM: Michael Queensland, Staff Attorney

RE: 2013 Assembly Bill 194, Relating to Crossbow Hunting

DATE: May 21, 2013

This memorandum responds to your request for information regarding 2013 Assembly Bill 194 ("the bill"), relating to crossbow hunting. Specifically, this memorandum addresses the following questions:

- Whether the bill, as it would be amended by Assembly Amendment 1, establishes separate hunting seasons for hunting with a crossbow<sup>1</sup> and a bow<sup>2</sup> and arrow; and
- Whether the bill establishes separate hunting licenses for hunting with a crossbow and a bow and arrow.

### HUNTING SEASON FOR CROSSBOW AND BOW AND ARROW

Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish open hunting seasons that allow the hunting of specified game animals. If the DNR establishes an open season for hunting certain game animals with a firearm, the season must also be open for hunting with a crossbow and a bow and arrow. If the DNR establishes an open season for hunting those animals with a bow and arrow but not with a firearm, the DNR may not open that season for hunting with a crossbow except by a person who is at least 65 years old or is disabled and holds a permit from the DNR that authorizes the use of a crossbow. [s. 29.014 (1m), Stats.]

You have introduced Assembly Amendment 1 to the bill. Under **the bill, as it would be amended**, if the DNR establishes an open season for hunting certain game animals with a

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<sup>1</sup> "Crossbow" means any device using a bow that, once drawn, is held solely by means other than the effort of the person firing it. [s. 29.001 (19m), Stats.]

<sup>2</sup> "Bow," when used with reference to hunting, means a bow, drawn and held by and through the effort of the person releasing it, but does not include a crossbow. [s. 29.001 (17), Stats.]

bow and arrow, but not a firearm, the DNR must “establish a concurrent open season for hunting the respective game with a crossbow.” “Concurrent”<sup>3</sup> means “operating or occurring at the same time.” [Merriam-Webster.com. <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (May 20, 2013).] Therefore, the bill, as it would be amended by Assembly Amendment 1, would create a separate open season for hunting with a crossbow that would operate at the same time as the open season for hunting with a bow and arrow.

### HUNTING LICENSE FOR CROSSBOW AND BOW AND ARROW

The bill creates new crossbow hunting licenses. SECTIONS 9 and 19 of the bill create a new resident crossbow hunting license and a new nonresident crossbow hunting license. These licenses authorize hunting with a crossbow only. A separate resident archer hunting license and nonresident archer hunting license remain in place for hunting with a bow and arrow.

Please note that the bill makes numerous other changes not identified in this memorandum. If you have any other questions regarding the bill or the amendment, please feel free to contact me directly at the Legislative Council staff offices.

MQ:jal

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<sup>3</sup> The word “concurrent” is used in a variety of contexts throughout the Wisconsin statutes, such as referring to concurrent criminal sentences and concurrent state and federal jurisdiction.



## 2013 ASSEMBLY BILL 194

### USE OF CROSSBOWS FOR HUNTING

**Testimony by:** Warden Todd Schaller, Recreation Enforcement, Education and Safety Section Chief

Appearing for Information Only  
May 22, 2013 10:00 AM  
Room 417 North (GAR Hall)

Over the past 34 years, there have been a number of changes regarding who is eligible to use a crossbow for hunting in Wisconsin.

A summary of most of these changes can be found on the back of my written testimony.

The department has not observed any law enforcement, or safety problems, associated with allowing the use of crossbows. We do not foresee any such problems created as a result of the provisions of this bill.

In 2012, the department reviewed approximately 4,100 disabled hunting permit applications requesting crossbow authorization. Approximately 2,400 were for permanent disabilities, while approximately 1,700 were for temporary disabilities.

Individuals with a disability which their doctor believes to be a permanent disability and which makes them eligible to hunt with a crossbow, are issued a permit valid for 5 years. If their condition has not changed after 5 years and they apply to renew their permit, each future permit is issued for 10 years. Permits that are issued for temporary disabilities may be issued for 6 months up to 5 years.

Passing this legislation would significantly reduce the workload associated with reviewing, issuing and denying disabled permits which authorize certain individuals to use a crossbow to hunt deer under and archer license during the state archery/bow deer hunting season.

This bill would also save disabled individuals under age 65 the cost of paying for doctors' visits and exams by physical therapists to see if they qualify for a permit.

**Thank you for your time.**

**I would be happy to try and answer any questions the committee may have.**

## SOME HISTORY OF CROSSBOW AUTHORITY IN WISCONSIN

Crossbows first became legal to use for hunting 34 years ago in 1979. (1977 Wis. Act 232). This authority was initially only provided to Residents who were hunting under the authority of an Archer license and who obtained a special Crossbow Permit.

For the first 10 years, to qualify for a Crossbow permit, a person simply needed to have a doctor sign an application which stated the applicant was: “unable to operate a manually pulled bow with a 30 lb. draw weight, because of a permanent physical disability.”

About 25 years ago (1988), new standards were developed by the departments Disabled Advisory Council and adopted by the legislature.

An applicant has since that time been required to meet certain specific measurable standards based on tests conducted by a physical therapist in order to be eligible for a crossbow permit. A person missing an arm, hand or index or middle finger on the draw and release hand automatically qualifies.

A little over 22 years ago (Dec 1991), the authority provided by the Class A, B and C Disabled hunting permits was expanded to also authorize hunting with a crossbows. Class A permits are available to certain persons with Heart disease, Lung disease, or who are unable to walk unassisted. Class B permits are available to individuals with temporary disabilities caused by injuries or surgery, and Class C permits are available to those who are visually handicapped.

The authority to use crossbows under these permits however was also initially limited to Residents only. Nonresidents became eligible to use a crossbow if they held a Class A, B or C disabled hunting permit about 14 Years ago, effective 1-1-1999.

Since December 1, 2001, (01 Wis. Act 18) - Resident Senior Citizens have been allowed to use crossbows for hunting without no need to be disabled or obtain a Permit. If any of these nondisabled residents, moves out of state, they could no longer use a crossbow to hunt in this state, not even if they had been legally using one previously.

In 2008, the Wis. Cons. Congress asked an advisory question at their spring hearing, as to whether or not a Nonresident Senior Citizen should be allowed to use crossbows for hunting the same as a Resident Senior Citizen. The vote was 3,295 in Support & 2,059 opposed, passing in 65 Counties.

In 2010, under 2009 Wis. Act 119, Nonresident Senior citizens were authorized to used crossbows without the need for a special Crossbow permit or need to be disabled, the same as resident seniors.

In 2012, under 2011 Wis. Act 252, everyone who purchases any hunting license (except that Archer Hunting license) is now authorized to use a crossbow for hunting species authorized under that license, without the need to be disabled or a senior citizen. The Archer license remains the only license the does not allow hunting deer or small game under that license unless the holder of the license is disabled and also holds a special disabled hunting permit authorizing the use of a crossbow, or is age 65 or older.



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# PAUL FARROW

STATE SENATOR

Date: May 22, 2013

To: Members of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources & Sporting Heritage

From: Senator Paul Farrow

Subject: Testimony on Assembly Bill (AB) 194; Crossbow hunting license established; resident, nonresident, and archer hunting license provisions

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Good morning Chairman Ott and members of the committee, and thank you for holding a Public Hearing on Assembly Bill 194 which will create a separate season and license for crossbow hunting in Wisconsin.

The purpose of this bill is to help preserve, retain and recruit past, current, and future hunters.

Retention of older hunters with diminished physical capabilities is critical to keeping our hunting heritage alive. As hunter numbers are declining nationwide, nothing is more important than keeping these hunters in the field years longer than they otherwise would if restricted by using vertical bows alone. By having them in the field longer, they are more likely to recruit more friends and family to take part in archery - including youth and female archers.

Crossbows can introduce new groups to hunting. Utilizing a crossbow will allow women, youths, the disabled and individuals with time constraints to engage in a new hunting season. The crossbow has a shorter learning curve, and requires less physical strength to employ.

Revenues generated through the purchases of required state hunting licenses and permits have been a valuable resource the State of Wisconsin in the past. However, these revenue resources have been in decline as the number of active hunters has grown smaller over the course of the last two decades. This legislation is one more way to help stop and reverse the loss of hunters in the field and to keep the revenue generated through licenses/permits and tourism here in Wisconsin.

Contrary to the claims of opponents, the experience in other states (such as Michigan) shows that archer success rates do not increase as a percentage with the use of a crossbow as opposed to a traditional vertical bow. The goal of all hunters should be to increase participation because greater hunter numbers in the future will bolster our ability to protect the heritage and traditions that we as Wisconsinites cherish.

I want to thank all interested parties and organizations for their work on this legislation. Through working together and finding compromise we have legislation that will enable our hunting heritage to grow for generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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SERVING WISCONSIN'S 33RD SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Office: Post Office Box 7882 • Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-9174 • Sen.Farrow@legis.wi.gov



AB 194

Bruce Haukom  
testifying for  
Wisconsin Traditional  
Archers - Director

Senator Neal Kedzie  
Wisconsin State Senate-11<sup>th</sup> District  
State Natural Resource Committee (Chair)

Dear Senator Kedzie

The members of the Wisconsin Traditional Archers would like to commend you, and the other members of the State Natural Resource Committee, regarding the "Lesser Weapons" legislation passed in 2012. The members of WTA wish to express our appreciation for an excellent compromise to a divisive issue. We feel that the inclusion of a crossbow into the existing firearm seasons is exactly where the crossbow belongs. Please convey our approval and appreciation to the other members of the committee.

We would also like to make you aware that the crossbow lobby is not content to allow these new opportunities to go unchallenged. With the help of the NRA they will not stop until they have full inclusion to the archery season. We have even heard of their interest in a dedicated, additional, crossbow season. In fact, we understand that members of the State Legislature are prepared to introduce crossbow legislation to that end. As you may expect, it will most likely be slipped into another bill, unrelated to crossbows. You would think that they, too, would be appreciative of the work you have done and at least allow the state of Wisconsin an opportunity to run with the new rules to assess its impact on the wildlife resources of our state.

Members of WTA obviously accept the limitations of our equipment by choice. We are not opposed to those who embrace modern weaponry. The modern weaponry brings with it greater accuracy at longer ranges. Of course the "effectiveness" of either weapon choice is in the hands of the individual using it. Let us hope that all hunters, regardless of weapon, are guided by a moral compass that ensures a clean, humane kill. However, the crossbow will clearly have more shot opportunities given its greater range. Crossbows are short, highly maneuverable, shoulder fired weapons with triggers and scopes with twice the range of bows. The technological advances in crossbows produce rifle-like accuracy and are only advancing further each year. The Lesser Weapon legislation has taken this into account and has placed it in the season structure that is appropriate for its use.

WTA urges you and other members of the committee to guard against encroachment of the crossbow beyond the rules currently established. Again, thank you for an excellent piece of legislation that provides opportunity for many.

The long archery season in Wisconsin allows us to pursue our passion, we put much time and effort into it and the joy we experience while in the field is hard to measure. Our weapons are efficient however our success rate is only in the mid 20% range because of limitations inherent with the bow and arrow, the ~~short~~ ~~range~~ need to be very close to our quarry and the movement necessary for us to draw and release the arrow. Often we are spotted as a result. The crossbow has twice the range and the point and shoot action results in little movement as the animal approaches. ~~The~~ success rates therefore are over 40%. In Michigan last year, in just their 2<sup>nd</sup> season, this resulted in 55,000 deer taken by the crossbow. These numbers will only climb with the technological advances ~~come~~ of this weapon.

The current language in this bill ties this separate season concurrently with the archery season. Our long season ~~so treasured~~ and necessary due to the limitations of the bow and arrow will be shored by this shoulder mounted, point and shoot weapon. The wording prevents the crossbow season from being shortened unless it correspondingly also occurs in the archery season. This was our fear with full inclusion into the archery season and it is now occurring with this current version of the bill. The original concept proposed would have had a limited season length with the ability to properly assess the long term impacts to the deer herd and make the necessary adjustments to the length of that season without impacting ~~the~~ <sup>length of</sup> the archery season that ~~is carried nationwide~~ attracts hunters nationwide. That ~~has~~ no longer exists with this bill Wisconsin was first in the nation to establish an archery season and it has been nothing but a success and we are willing to jeopardize that? Our young people have demonstrated a new passion for the sport with the NASP flourishing. ~~This bill has nothing to do with and participation at our shoots only increasing.~~ archery events ~~and~~ increasing. ~~The crossbow is not the weapon of choice for the young it is, the bow and arrow of our youth, and the woodsman ship that follows this passion~~

(2)

The crossbow is not the weapon to bring the elderly hunter back to the woods. Remember they can already use this weapon if 65 and over. This is certainly is not what draws our young people. In fact it is the most unsafe weapon for that purpose with ~~a~~ clumsy cocking mechanism, unsafe hand location relative to the launching cable and safety placements that can put ~~your~~ head in the direct line of fire.

are we honestly ready to place a high percentage weapon with its increasing technological advances in the pre rut and rut periods, the most vulnerable period for the whitetail deer.

The change that has occurred to this bill has removed all considerations for this significant impact to the structure of our deer herd and its consequences for the archery season and success rates for traditional gun season hunters. This ultimately effects the long held traditions of Wisconsin Deer Hunting. This should not be an easy decision, it can't be. ~~Deliberation is~~ Please take the time it takes and ~~at~~ at the very least place the needed checks and balances.

The need to appease the industry or a powerful national hunting weapons organization is not what is important here. Protecting the traditions we have established in this state to make the time hunting a field so special.

These major modifications to deer hunting in Wisconsin are a mistake with consequences that are far reaching. ~~Take a~~ at least take a step back and consult with Senator Klodze on this matter. ~~Archery in Wisconsin~~ before mistakes that can't be easily remedied are made.

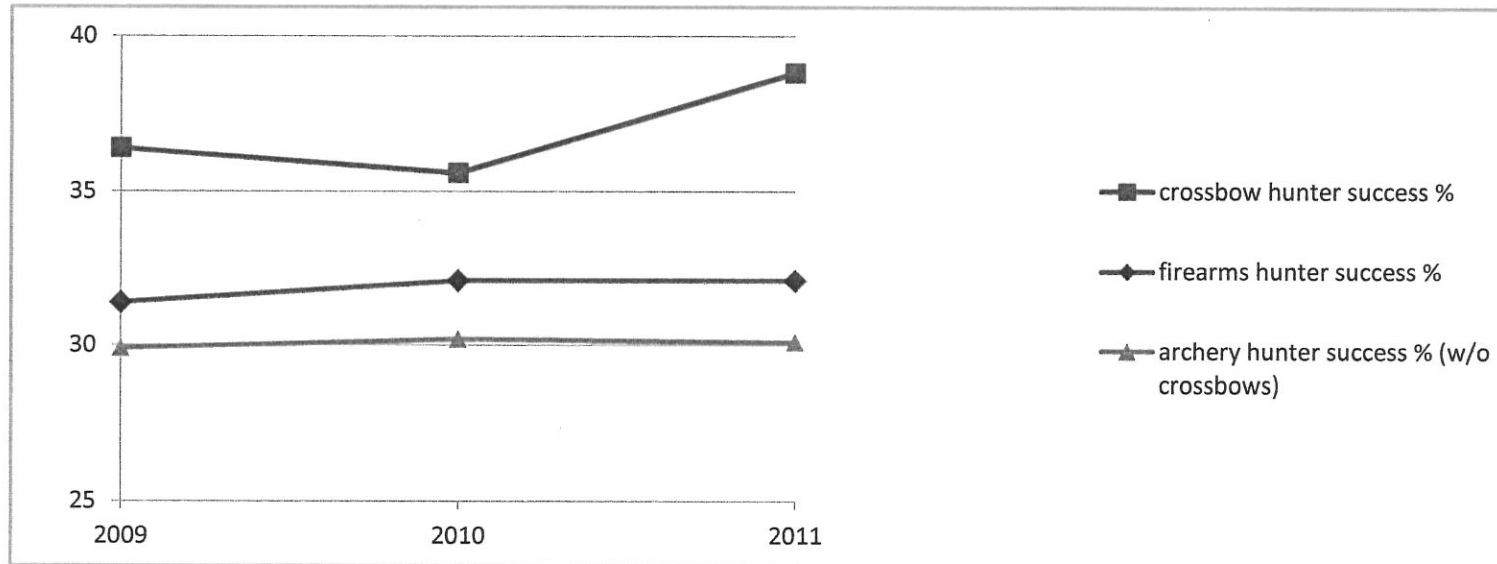
Thank you.

In 2009 Michigan allowed crossbow hunting during most of the archery deer season and tabulated harvest results by weapon type  
 Following are the hunter success percentage by weapon type for the first three years

MI Deer hunter success percentage by weapon type, 2009 -2011

	2009	2010	2011
crossbow hunter success %	36.4	35.6	38.8
firearms hunter success %	31.4	32.1	32.1
archery hunter success % (w/o crossbows)	29.9	30.2	30.1

*Dean Hall  
 former Pros  
 M.B.H.*



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
**Institute for Legislative Action**  
11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD  
FAIRFAX, VA 22030  
FAX (703) 267-3976



May 22, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Rifle Association of America (NRA), I am here to provide NRA-ILA's full throated support of Assembly Bill 194 authorizing the use of crossbows during the same time frame as the state deer archery season. This important legislation would dramatically expand hunter opportunity and assist in Wisconsin's efforts to recruit and retain hunters afield.

The NRA advocates for any expansion of hunter opportunity and choice where there is no biological reason to oppose the expansion. Preserving and strengthening our cherished hunting heritage depends on it.

Experience in the 24 full-inclusion crossbow states proves that allowing the unqualified use of crossbows helps to retain and recruit hunters while having no detrimental impact on game populations. At a time when hunter numbers are declining, promoting hunter recruitment and retention is more important than ever. Retention of older hunters with diminished physical capabilities is especially critical. Allowing these hunters to transition from vertical bows to crossbows when they choose to do so encourages them to continue archery hunting for decades longer than they otherwise would. Because of this, they are able to recruit more friends and family members throughout their careers.

Mentoring new hunters is one of the most important things any of us can do to strengthen our hunting heritage. However, this is much more difficult to do when a particular hunting season is relatively short, as is the case with the nine day rifle season. Experienced hunters are understandably more involved in attempting to ensure their own success during the brief rifle season than they would be during an archery season that spans more than 90 days. Allowing crossbow use will encourage more rifle hunters to transition to crossbows. The much longer season that is available to them will provide them more time to focus their efforts on bringing more children and adults into the life-long hunter ranks while still allowing ample time for them to secure their own success.

Another important aspect of allowing the full-inclusion of crossbows is that younger hunter who may not have the physical strength to draw a vertical bow would finally be able to participate in the archery season. This much longer season would give them many more opportunities to go afield at a time when school and extracurricular demands seem to be growing exponentially.

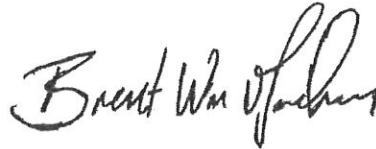
According to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation, only 71 new hunters are recruited to the field in Wisconsin for every 100 who permanently leave it (a hunter replacement ratio of 0.71). Wisconsin is to be commended for its many recent efforts to improve this alarming ratio including last year's passage of the Sporting Heritage Act and this crossbow proposal is one more logical step in that laudable endeavor.

Contrary to the claims of critics, the experience in other states shows that archer success rates do not increase with the use of a crossbow as opposed to a vertical bow. The goal of all hunters should be to increase participation because greater hunter numbers in the future will bolster defenses against the political attacks initiated by anti-hunting extremists like the Humane Society of the United States.

With the passage of this bill the time for this issue dividing our sporting community will have come and gone. Ultimately, a hunter during the archery season should not care whether the hunter on the next piece of ground is using a longbow, recurve bow, compound bow or crossbow. It should all come down to the individual hunter making the choice that is best for his or her circumstances.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this legislation. If I could be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-267-1384.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brent Wm. Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'B'.

Brent Wm. Gardner  
Wisconsin State Liaison  
NRA-ILA State and Local Affairs