



# TOM TIFFANY

STATE SENATOR • 12TH SENATE DISTRICT

## Testimony on Senate Bill 542

### Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry

I want to thank members of the committee for hearing Senate Bill 542 today.

Currently, in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources is authorized to allow the hunting and trapping of wolves if the wolf is not listed on the endangered species list. At the moment, because of a ruling by a federal judge, the wolf is currently on this list.

However, Wisconsin did hold a wolf hunting and trapping season from 2012 through 2014. Under current rules, if allowed, the wolf hunt begins on October 15<sup>th</sup> and runs until February or until the quotas are reached. There have been indications that there may be conflicts between trappers and hunters with bird hunting dogs being caught in traps during this time. Also, the wolf pelt is not prime by mid-October, yet the risk of zone closures force trappers to harvest animals before the pelts are prime.

When a wolf hunt is once again authorized in Wisconsin, this bill would move the wolf season opening date back to a later date to help address these issues.

I would like to note that a question asking to change the opening of the wolf harvest season to the first Saturday in November received overwhelming support at the 2015 Wisconsin Conservation Congress annual spring meeting (2354 – Yes; 814 – No. Approved in 70 counties).

I want to thank Representatives Ott and Danou for their work on this bill, and I would also like to thank members of the committee for hearing this bill today.



**Al Ott**

State Representative • 3rd Assembly District

**Senate Bill 542**  
**Wolf Season Start Date**  
**Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry**  
**February 2, 2016**

Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to allow the hunting and trapping of wolves if the wolf is not listed by the federal or state government as an endangered or threatened species.

As you know, Wisconsin held wolf hunting and trapping seasons as part of the state's wolf management efforts from 2012 through 2014. In December 2014, a federal court relisted the gray wolf as an endangered species in the Western Great Lakes region, including Wisconsin.

There are efforts underway in Congress to remove the gray wolf in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Wyoming from the Federal Endangered Species List. If successful, Wisconsin would regain the right to manage wolves in this state, and a harvest season would once again be allowed.

Under the currently established structure, any wolf harvest season begins on October 15th of every year. The pressure to harvest a wolf before zones close has created conflicts between trappers and bird hunters who have their hunting dogs caught in wolf traps. Further, in mid-October, the wolf pelt is not prime, but the risk of zone closure forces trappers to harvest animals before the pelts have reached their prime.

Moving the wolf season opening to a later date would help to address these issues.

A question asking to change the opening of the wolf harvest season to the first Saturday in November received overwhelming support at the 2015 Wisconsin Conservation Congress annual spring meeting. (2354 – Yes; 814 – No. Approved in 70 counties.)

Senate Bill 542 simply changes the statutory opening of the wolf hunting and trapping season from October 15<sup>th</sup> to the first Saturday in November of each year in which wolf hunting and trapping is allowed.