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From: Senator Kathy Bernier

To: Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry

Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 383
Relating to: the fee for a first-time annual fishing license for residents who are 16 or 17 years old or who are 65 years old or older.

Date: October 1, 2019

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for hearing Senate Bill 383, a technical fix that would grant discounted first-time fishing licenses to teens and senior citizens since they are currently excluded.

In 2011, Wisconsin Act 168 established a discount for purchasing a fishing license for the first time. However, residents who are age 16, 17 or are over the age of 65 were unintentionally excluded from getting this discount. As a result, a first-time fishing license costs \$5.00 for the general public, but \$7.00 for those who are 16, 17, or over the age of 65. Senate Bill 383 would correct this error by making first-time fishing licenses available for just \$5.00 to any resident.

I hope you'll join me in our continued efforts to encourage people of all ages to get outside and enjoy Wisconsin's abundant natural resources. Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 383.



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Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Public Hearing, SB 383
October 1, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee for holding a public hearing on SB 383, relating to the fee for a first-time annual fishing license for residents who are 16 or 17 years old or who are 65 years old or older.

The 2011 Wisconsin Act 168 created a first-time license discount of \$5.00 (\$4.25 plus a \$.75 issuance fee) to recruit new anglers in Wisconsin. However, the bill unintentionally excluded 16 and 17 year olds and individuals 65 and older from the \$5.00 fishing fee.

Currently, these two age groups are eligible for a reduced annual license fee of \$7.00. This \$2 difference, while seemingly insignificant, was brought to our attention by a resident of the 99th District. She was unable to secure the \$5.00 fee for her daughter. For the sake of uniformity and to further incentivize first-time fisherman in Wisconsin, SB 383 would lower the first-time, eligible license fees for 16 and 17 year olds and those 65 and older to \$5.00.

It is my hope that the Committee support SB 383 to encourage individuals of all ages, young and old, to enjoy Wisconsin's lakes and take part in the tradition of fishing in Wisconsin.

Thank you again for hearing SB 383.

Representative Cindi Duchow



Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry

2019 Senate Bill 383

First-time annual fishing license fee for residents 16 or 17 years old or 65 years or older October 1, 2019

Good morning Chairman Tiffany and committee members. My name is Linda Olver and I am the Policy Advisor in the Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Thank you for the opportunity to testify for informational purposes on Senate Bill 383, which extends a reduced first-time buyer license fee to annual fishing licenses sold to resident youth aged 16-17 years and to resident seniors aged 65 years or older.

Discounted first-time buyer license fees were added to statute via 2011 Wisconsin Act 168 and became effective in April 2012. Resident fishing licenses issued to the junior and senior age groups, however, were not specified as eligible for the first-time buyer fee. SB 383 decreases the current \$6.25 annual fishing license fee for 16 and 17 year olds, and senior citizens 65 and older by \$2.00, down to the first time buyer fee of \$4.25 if the annual fishing license is issued to a resident who has not received that type of approval, or been conferred the privileges of that type of approval, in any of the ten years preceding the date of application.

Based upon 2018 license year data, 30,441 residents 16 and 17 years of age and 2,109 resident seniors 65 year of age and older would be newly eligible for the first-time buyer fee, resulting in \$65,100 in annual revenue decrease to the Fish and Wildlife Account. This estimated annual revenue decrease is 0.18% of the approximately \$37 million of annual fish-related revenue.

To implement the provisions of this bill, the department anticipates a modest one-time cost of approximately \$4,000 to update web pages and other informational materials, develop and provide training to license agents and Customer Service Representatives, and modify the automated license issuance system.

While there will be one-time implementation costs and a slight annual revenue decrease to the Fish and Wildlife Account, this bill rectifies an inconsistency in new buyer pricing for 16-17-year olds and those 65 and over. SB 383 provides common sense clarity to new buyer pricing, will likely provide a more positive license buying experience for resident anglers and eliminate some common customer confusion.

I hope you find this information helpful as you consider SB 383. I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this proposal.



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DATE: September 30, 2019

TO: Senators of the Sporting Heritage Mining and Forestry Committee

SUBJECT: SB 383

On behalf of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) I would like to express our concern with creating yet another special license for approval of hunting, fishing or trapping. Currently all first-time authorizations for first-time hunting, fishing and trapping are \$5. If I read correctly, this legislation creates a separate license at \$4.25 which is different than every other first-time purchaser. Currently the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offer a junior fishing license for those 16 & 17-year-olds and another senior license for those over 65 years old for \$7. So, in creating another new type of fishing license the savings to those few individuals that may fill into this very limited category is only \$2.75. Yet, in all the research on why people don't enter into hunting, fishing, and trapping, the cost of the authorization is repeatedly found to not be an impeding factor in recruiting new people to our sport.

Every year the WCC receives citizen resolutions with someone wanting to create yet another discounted hunting, fishing, or trapping license for yet another special group. It is getting to the point that DNR has so many different authorizations that it has become incredibly confusing and complex to understand what one needs to purchase. I encourage you to look at the web site in this link (<https://dnr.wi.gov/GoWild/resident.html>) which will show the plethora of authorizations at a variety of cost for different special groups. Not only does this create confusion for the purchaser but there is significant cost to DNR having so many different authorizations. The GoWild system is run by a private vendor. The more products they offer the more the cost is to develop, support and manage that system. These are moneys come from the Fish and Wildlife Account and could be used far more effectively in resource management rather than management of a complex licensing system. A prime example is the "recruiter license." This license is offered a reduced rate for an individual who has recruited a certain number of people to hunting fishing or trapping. Since the inception of this license there has been less than five sold in total. Meanwhile the cost of administering and management of this one type of license has cost the DNR thousands of dollars.

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

I strongly encourage you to **not** move this legislation forward. As Chair of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, I extend the offer of gathering with a group of legislators and interested sporting groups to see if we can simplify our licensing system by reducing the number and types of authorization the DNR offers to the sporting public. Many states have a "special license" that combines youth, disabled, veterans and other special groups into one reduced cost authorization. If Wisconsin could create this same type of authorization, we could reduce complexity, confusion and monetary waste of our resource dollars.

For these reasons the WCC does not support this legislation to create yet another authorization for fishing in Wisconsin.

Please feel free to reach out to me at (920)286-3327.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Bonde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Bonde, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress