



JILL BILLINGS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

January 12, 2022

Chairman Pronschinske and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 434 (AB 434). AB 434 is a bipartisan bill that would add licensed physical therapists and occupational therapists to the list of providers who can certify the disability of an applicant for a no-cost approval for hunting, fishing, or trapping.

This legislation works to make hunting and fishing approvals more accessible to people with disabilities. Often times, people have established relationships with their physical or occupational therapist and visit them more often than their other health care providers. This bill saves these individuals both time and resources by not requiring them to make an additional appointment to see a different health care provider when needing a certification of disability.

Allowing licensed physical therapists and occupational therapists to verify the applicant's disability reduces barriers to a no-cost approval for certain individuals with disabilities. I believe that these professionally licensed therapists have the expertise and knowledge of their clients' disability to make this determination.

This policy change was initially brought to my attention by an occupational therapist that worked in the La Crosse area. Since its first introduction in the 2019-20 legislative session, I have heard from a number of medical professionals and disability advocacy groups that have vocalized their support for this change.

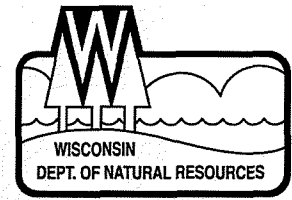
Please join me in supporting Assembly Bill 434 to make outdoor recreation more accessible for all Wisconsinites, regardless of disability status.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Billings". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the printed name.

Jill Billings
State Representative
95th Assembly District



Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage

2021 Assembly Bill 434

Hunting and Fishing Approvals for Persons with Disabilities

January 12, 2022

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) welcomes the opportunity to provide written testimony on Assembly Bill 434, relating to hunting and fishing approvals for persons with disabilities.

The department is authorized by statute to offer qualified disabled residents a discounted annual fishing license and to permit the use of specific hunting and fishing methods that would otherwise not be available to hunters and anglers (i.e. shoot from vehicle, use an electric trolling motor where otherwise restricted, etc.). Certain classes of disabled hunting permits allow for participation in the Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities, which is held on sponsored properties for 10 days in October. In addition, certain classes of disabled permits allow for the more flexible use of deer harvest authorizations (allowing buck harvest during antlerless-only seasons and statewide use of antlerless harvest authorizations). This bill proposes to expand the list of medical professionals that may certify an applicant is disabled when applying for a disabled resident annual fishing license and hunting and fishing method accommodations authorized by statute. Authorized health care providers are asked to certify under penalty of perjury that the applicant has a medical condition and to further detail and certify that certain conditions or limitations are experienced by the customer on the disability permit applications that are submitted to the DNR for review.

In particular, the following are impacted by the provisions of this bill:

- Trolling permit – adds that a physical or occupational therapist is authorized to conduct and certify test results for upper body loss of function and to sign a certificate stating the applicant's sight is impaired to the degree that he or she cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses.
- Disabled hunting permit – adds that a physical or occupational therapist is authorized to provide and sign a written statement or report on an application for a disabled hunting permit verifying that the applicant is physically disabled.
- Discretionary Class B disabled hunting permit appeal process – adds physical and occupational therapists to the list of medical professionals that are authorized to provide a recommendation for the department to consider regarding the issuance of a Class B disabled hunting permit.
- Class D disabled hunting permit - adds that a physical or occupational therapist is authorized to conduct and certify test results for arm and shoulder loss of function.
- Annual fishing license for disabled residents - adds that a physical or occupational therapist is authorized to certify that the sight of an applicant is impaired to the degree that he or she cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses.

While revenue would not be impacted by the provisions of this bill, one-time costs would be required to implement updates to the department's licensing system, disabled permit website, Disabled Permit Application, manuals, and training materials. In addition, the department must develop and provide

training to approximately 100 Customer Service Representatives on the expanded authorizers. It is estimated that approximately \$6,000 would be required for updating the licensing system, updating informational materials and training staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. If you have questions or if there is any further information the department can provide, please feel free to contact Sean Kennedy, DNR Legislative Liaison, at Seanp.Kennedy@Wisconsin.gov.