



## PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

RE: **Testimony on Senate Bill 563**

TO: The Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, & Rural Issues

FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

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Thank you to Senator Stafsholt and to members of the committee for hearing my testimony on Senate Bill 563 (SB 563).

This bill expands Wisconsin's hunting opportunities by permitting the hunting of non-native farm-raised game bovids – such as bighorn sheep or Thompson's gazelle. In some cases, farmers are already raising these animals in Wisconsin, but must send them to other states to be hunted. That has been the case for one of my constituents who raises bighorn sheep. The animals are bred and born here, but he sends them to be hunted in Michigan and Missouri.

Whether raised in Wisconsin or brought here for the purpose of the hunt, these species will add to the diversity of choices for Wisconsin hunters and will make our state an even more attractive destination for sportsmen and women.



# Jeff Mursau

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 36<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, and Rural Issues  
SB 563 – Farm-Raised Game Bovids  
October 18, 2021

Chairperson Stafsholt and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 563, which relates to farm-raised game bovids. This bill is part of the Wisconsin Sporting Freedom Package. I appreciate your willingness to bring this bill forward.

Under current law, there are many requirements and restrictions relating to the hunting, killing, possessing, transporting, and selling of wild animals. However, these requirements and restrictions generally do not apply to farm-raised deer. This bill makes numerous changes to our statutes so that farm-raised game bovids are treated in the same manner as farm-raised deer.

This bill defines “farm-raised game bovid” as animals kept in captivity to be hunted that are members of the taxonomic family bovidae, which includes animals more commonly known as bison, buffalo, sheep, goats, and antelopes. Under this bill, farm-raised game bovids would be required to be fenced in the same manner as farm-raised deer.

Hunting is a long-standing, proud Wisconsin tradition. Under this bill, Wisconsin hunters will have an opportunity to hunt non-native bovids. In some instances, these animals are already being raised on Wisconsin game farms, but transported out-of-state for sportsmen and women to hunt. This puts Wisconsin’s tourism industry and our local economies at a competitive disadvantage when folks are looking for where they can go to hunt a variety of different animals they might not otherwise be able to. I’m thankful my legislative colleagues recognized the opportunities this bill could provide our sportsmen and women and included it as part of the sporting freedom package.

Once again, thank you for holding a public hearing on this piece of legislation. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.

My name is Patrick Ries. I reside at W2749 Golf Course Road, Mount Calvary, WI 53057.

I am requesting that my comments be added as official testimony to the committee record.

I am a bison producer in the State of Wisconsin. I am also on the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association (WBPA). I have recently become aware of the 2021 Senate Bill 563. I am also aware that as this legislation was being developed, no one contacted the Wisconsin Bison Producers Association. I oppose this Senate Bill as written.

There are a number of reasons to oppose this bill as written. For example:

1. There are occasions where individuals want to harvest their own animals, mainly for cultural and/or religious reasons.
2. There are some producers/processing plants in Wisconsin that field harvest animals. These animals that are field harvested are inspected by State or Federal inspectors.
3. There are some producers that sell live animals to an individual, who further field harvest the animal, and has the animal further processed by processors who are not State or Federally inspected.
4. There are mobile processing plants in Wisconsin, that are either State or Federally inspected, that field harvest the animals.

These are just a few specific examples on why I oppose the legislation as written. Given some time to discuss this further with our membership, there are probably many more examples of the unintended impact this legislation could have on bison producers.

As an alternative, if you revise the definition to remove "taxonomic family bovidae" and replace it with "taxonomic sub-family antilopinae", that should address our concerns. I have included a taxonomy chart illustrating the taxonomy. Using this sub-family would appear to address what this legislation was intended to do.

