

April 14, 1995

Wisconsin Legislators  
State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Legislator:

When Governor Knowles reorganized state government in 1967, one of the most controversial issues was whether to merge two disparate agencies, the Conservation Department with the Department of Resource Development.

The compromise resolution was the creation of the Department of Natural Resources, with two interdependent checks and balances to ensure public input and public interest advocacy in natural resources issues--our DNR citizen board to set resource policy and our watchdog "intervenor" on the outside to guard the "public rights" we all share under the law.

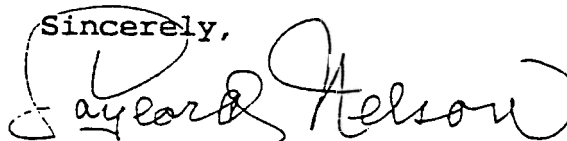
It is undoubtedly healthy and wise to periodically review important state institutions. One important institution under scrutiny is the Public Intervenor office. While extremely small within all of state government, the office has played an extremely critical role in helping keep Wisconsin as one of the natural resource jewels of the country.

No one says the DNR Board or the Intervenor office have failed to do their jobs. The need for them to perform their roles is even greater today than it was 25 years ago.

It is no surprise to me, and a source of pride I share with you, that Wisconsin ranks in the top 10 states throughout the country for both its strong economy and strong environmental protections.

In a day and age of diminishing "win-wins", I urge you to retain the Public Intervenor office, a key public voice in Wisconsin's long-standing ethic and tradition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gaylord Nelson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Honorable Gaylord Nelson

cc: Governor Tommy Thompson