



## WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, July 30, 2001

Rep. Spencer Black (608) 266-7521  
Sen. Jim Baumgart (608) 266-2056

### **Lawmakers Urge McCallum to Veto DNR Split**

*Black & Baumgart ask Governor to continue bipartisan environmental protection*

Two leading environmentalists in the Legislature today urged Governor Scott McCallum to veto the budget provision splitting the Department of Natural Resources in two. In a letter to the governor, Assembly Democratic Leader Spencer Black and Senate Environmental Resources Committee Chair Jim Baumgart called the move "a foot in the door to further dismantling of the DNR by those who do not value its role in keeping Wisconsin livable for future generations."

"When you swing an axe at a tree, you don't do it to strengthen the tree. Similarly, this swipe at the DNR will do nothing to strengthen the management and protection of our forests. It will do lasting damage to a system that has served the people of Wisconsin well," Black and Baumgart wrote.

The compromise budget approved Thursday night by the Assembly and Senate would split the Division of Forestry from the rest of the DNR and make it a separate department. It was inserted by Republicans on the budget conference committee after an earlier proposal to more drastically split the DNR was rejected by the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee.

"We hope that Scott McCallum does not want to be remembered as the governor who dismantled the DNR. He didn't ask for the DNR split, and his own hand-picked DNR Secretary strongly opposes it," Black said.

"Governor McCallum is now the only person in the state who has the power to stop the DNR split from happening. He should use his veto power to uphold our state's tradition of bipartisan resource protection," Baumgart said.

In their letter, Black and Baumgart cited the DNR's creation by Republican Governor Warren Knowles in the 1960s as part of a reform effort to make state government more professional.

"One of the reasons the DNR has been so effective is that it treats recreation, resource management and environmental protection as interrelated issues that require a coordinated response," Black and Baumgart wrote. "We are especially concerned that this a foot in the door to further dismantling of the DNR by those who do not value its role in keeping Wisconsin livable for future generations."

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July 30, 2001

Governor Scott McCallum  
115 East, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor McCallum:

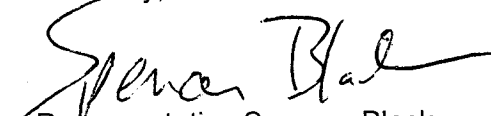
Wisconsin has a long tradition of bipartisan support for our conservation and environmental programs. In the 1960s, under Republican Governor Warren Knowles, the Department of Natural Resources was created to coordinate the efforts of a handful of agencies with responsibility for conservation, hunting, fishing and anti-pollution laws. It was the product of a Republican-led reform commission to bring more professional management to state government.


One of the reasons the DNR has been so effective is that it treats recreation, resource management and environmental protection as interrelated issues that require a coordinated response. We are deeply troubled that the state budget bill now before you disrupts this coordination by separating the Division of Forestry from the rest of the DNR. This split represents poor ecological policy and would create unnecessary administrative duplication. It was not something you requested in the budget, was rejected by the Joint Finance Committee, and has never had a public hearing.

We are especially concerned that this a foot in the door to further dismantling of the DNR by those who do not value its role in keeping Wisconsin livable for future generations. The different functions of DNR are integrally linked. For example, it would make no sense to have separate agencies dealing with fisheries and water pollution. The health of the fish population is directly linked to water quality.

When you swing an axe at a tree, you don't do it to strengthen the tree. Similarly, this swipe at the DNR will do nothing to strengthen the management and protection of our forests. It will do lasting damage to a system that has served the people of Wisconsin well. We strongly urge that you veto it from the budget bill.

Sincerely,

  
Representative Spencer Black  
Assembly Democratic Leader

  
Sen. James Baumgart, Chair  
Committee on Environmental Resources