



## REPRESENTATIVE MARK MILLER

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### **Bill Threatens Wisconsin Waterways** *What Will Be Next, Our State Woodlands?*

**Madison**— Today a public hearing was held in the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources on a bill that proposes to redefine “navigable” waterways. If enacted this bill could significantly limit the number of waterways with public access as well as limit the number of streams and creeks under state protection.

“It would be sad to see less protection of our waterways in the Year of the Water,” stated Rep. Miller. “This bill, as written, raises serious concerns for me because public access and protection of waterways is essential to Wisconsin’s livelihood.”

Assembly Bill 506 (AB 506) proposes changing the definition of navigable to include only those lakes and streams that can support a watercraft carrying a person for 6 months of the year. This would apply to any year for which measurements are being taken. Under current law, waterways are navigable if you can float a canoe down them any time during the year.

“The issue of navigability is complex, which is why there was a special legislative study committee on it,” said Rep. Miller. “The committee put forth an agreeable recommendation in Assembly Bill 514 that we should consider.”

AB 514 also had a public hearing at today’s Natural Resources Committee. AB 514 is a product of the Special Committee on Navigable Waters Recodification. There were 16 members which included representatives of: the Assembly, Senate, UW, Farm Bureau, Association of Lakes, non-powered watercrafts, developers, Mercury Marine, municipalities, and tourism.

“The navigable waterways that could be negatively effected by AB 506 could be the ones you fish or swim in,” declared Miller. “The legislature needs to make sure we don’t get into the habit of not protecting those resources that make our state great. Because what will be next, our state woodlands?”