



Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

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AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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News Release

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The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation Opposes the “Lake, Stream and Job Destruction Act of 2003”

Prescott---Today, the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, the state’s largest conservation organization, expressed its strong opposition to Senate Bill 313 and Assembly Bill 655 inappropriately titled the “Job Creation Act of 2003”. The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is comprised of 82 hunting, fishing and trapping organizations located throughout the state and is dedicated to protecting fish and wildlife habitat in Wisconsin.

Under the guise of a job creation bill, the state legislature is poised to undermine many of the existing conservation and health regulations which protect fish and wildlife habitat in the State of Wisconsin. In addition, the bill eliminates the right of individual hunters, anglers and trappers to challenge governmental decisions that would destroy fish and wildlife habitat in the state.

“Hunters, anglers and trappers in the state understand the need to have strong regulations to assure that the habitat in Wisconsin lakes, streams and wetlands is there to support fish and wildlife habitat for ourselves and our children and grandchildren,” stated Jerry Knuth, (Plover), President of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, “Not only are these regulations important for conservation, they are important to maintain the strong outdoor recreation economy which relies on lake and stream based fish and wildlife habitat.”

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Wisconsin's fish and wildlife based tourism economy is estimated to generate \$6.4 billion dollars a year, results in 86,000 jobs a year and generates at least \$209 million a year in taxes, (1996 data).

“This bill would substantially reduce or eliminate regulations regarding the filling in of waterways, removing materials from the beds of lakes and streams, straightening large stretches of streams and would prevent Wisconsin from reducing mercury getting into our lakes, fish and kids,” stated George Meyer, Executive Director of the Federation. “Without our current water regulatory laws, it would only be a matter of time before Wisconsin's great lakes and streams would resemble those in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, which have lost a major portion of their fish and wildlife habitat. When was the last time any of us took a fishing trip to one of Illinois streams,” asked Meyer.

These bills, each totaling 114 pages in length were introduced Tuesday afternoon, November 11, 2003 and were scheduled for public hearing on Wednesday morning, November 12, 2003 before the Legislature's Joint Finance committee and may be taken up before the Legislature before the end of the week.

“These bills are very important to hunters, anglers and trappers throughout the state and we ask the Legislature to hold hearings statewide in the next couple of months so that average citizens can learn about the impact of this bill on their favorite lake, stream and wetland and have the opportunity to give true public input on this bill,” concluded Meyer.

The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation is dedicated to conservation education and the advancement of sound conservation policies. For further information, contact George Meyer, Executive Director at 608-516-5545.