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Monday, April 22, 2013

The Honorable Alvin Ott  
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage  
Room 323 North, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53708

RE: Assembly Bill 137 relating to requiring an open season for woodchucks

Dear Chair Ott and members of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting heritage:

On Monday, April 13, 2009, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress asked the following question on the Spring Hearings Questionnaire.

**QUESTION 69 – Remove Woodchucks from the List of Protected Species**

Woodchucks are currently listed as a protected species in the State of Wisconsin. However, there is no biological or resource management related evidence that supports the listing of woodchucks as a protected species. The designation of “protected” means that a person may not take, attempt to take, transport or possess a woodchuck with a few exceptions. This designation is typically reserved for species in need of protection for social or biological reasons. Some other species currently listed as protected include lynx, badgers, moose, albino deer and birds of prey.

Currently, there is an exemption in state statute that allows landowners in Wisconsin, without a small game license and subject to all other restrictions except seasons, to hunt or trap on their property for woodchucks year-round. Landowners are also allowed to give others permission to hunt or trap woodchucks that are causing damage.

Removing woodchucks from the list of protected species would still allow landowners to hunt or trap woodchucks without a license on their property, but it would also allow non-landowners to hunt or trap woodchucks under the authority of a small game license.

Would you support removing woodchucks from the list of protected species?

This question passed in all seventy-two counties with 5,532 yes votes to 760 no votes.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress supports the removal of woodchucks from the protected list, the defining of woodchuck as a game animal and as a fur-bearing animal, and the right for persons to hunt woodchucks under the authority of a small game hunting license and trap woodchucks under a trapping license. On behalf of our constituents that attended and voted in favor of the change in 2009, we respectfully request that you support the passage of AB-137.

Rob Bohmann, Chair  
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

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As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.