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RE: Emergency Board Order FH-17-14(E), proposed rules affecting NR 20 and 23 related to modifications in walleye harvest management in Ceded Territory waters

Chair Cole, Secretary Stepp, and members of the Natural Resources Board;

The Conservation Congress would like to offer our support for the emergency rule before you relating to walleye harvest on waters within the Ceded Territory. The proposed rule will provide a more stable and predictable fishing season structure for both anglers and associated businesses by creating a three walleye bag limit with varying size limits on waters within the Ceded Territory. The current model adjusts bag limits mid-season based on the declaration of Chippewa tribes and allows for annual fluctuation in the number of walleye available to non-Chippewa anglers.

This constantly variability leads to uncertainty with what the regulations and season will hold for non-tribal anglers and can fuel animosity amongst user groups. Simplifying and stabilizing walleye harvest regulations on waters of the Ceded Territory will go a long way to easing tensions that sometimes arise due to frequently adjusted bag limits.

I would like to thank the department staff for their work on this rule to streamline the regulations and alleviate uncertainty with non-tribal walleye harvest in the Ceded Territory while maintaining a sustainable walleye fishery. The Congress looks forward to continuing to work closely with both the DNR and the tribes on future conservation efforts.

Rob Bohmann, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

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.