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Friday, May 22, 2015

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

RE: Assembly Bill 44, relating to: transfer of certain fish and game approvals to persons with disabilities and the transfer of Class A bear licenses to persons awarded the Purple Heart or serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces.

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

On Monday, April 9, 2012, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress asked the following question on the Spring Hearings Questionnaire.

QUESTION 63. Transfer of License/Permit to Senior or Disabled Person

Some Wisconsin senior and/or disabled residents may not have the opportunity to harvest a bear, bobcat, turkey, fisher, otter, or sturgeon that requires individuals to obtain a harvest permit using the cumulative point preference system. The length of time it takes to secure a permit varies, but can be a number of years. This extended period of time required to acquire a permit may prevent some senior and/or disabled residents with deteriorating health from participating in one of these hunting opportunities.

63. Would you support legislation to allow the transfer of a valid permit from a successful permit holder to a senior (65 years of age or older) or disabled resident?

This question passed in seventy-one counties and was rejected in one county with 2,743 yes votes and 771 no votes, and was supported by the Conservation Congress at their annual convention in Manitowoc on Friday, May 11, 2012.

On Monday, April 8, 2013, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress asked the following questions on the Spring Hearings Questionnaire.

QUESTION 71. Transfer Class A Bear Harvest Permit

At present there is no way to transfer a Class A Bear Harvest Permit to a currently active duty Armed Forces member or Purple Heart recipient.

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.



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Permits that are transferred have already been applied for and received by a person. There is no need to have any special permits available above and beyond the approved quotas or permits that the DNR has set for that year's season.

71. Are you in favor of a Class A Bear Harvest Permit holder to have the ability to transfer their Bear Harvest Permit to any currently active duty Armed Forces member or Purple Heart recipient for a once in a lifetime transfer?

This question passed in all seventy-two counties with 3,753 yes votes and 802 no votes, and was supported by the Conservation Congress at their annual convention in Eau Claire on Friday May 10, 2013.

QUESTION 85. Transfer of license/ permit

Some Wisconsin senior and/or disabled residents may not have the opportunity to harvest a bear, bobcat, turkey, fisher, otter, or sturgeon, as the ability to harvest these species requires individuals to obtain a harvest permit using the cumulative point preference system. The length of time it takes to secure a permit varies, but can be a number of years. This extended period of time required to acquire a permit may prevent some senior and/or disabled residents with deteriorating health from participating in one of these harvest opportunities.

85. Would you support legislation to allow the transfer of a valid permit from a successful permit holder to a senior (65 years of age or older) or disabled resident for a "first time" or "one time" harvest opportunity?

This question passed in all seventy-two counties as well with 3,459 yes votes and 976 no votes, and was also supported by the Conservation Congress at their annual convention in Eau Claire on Friday May 10, 2013.

On Monday, April 14, 2014, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress asked the following questions on the Spring Hearings Questionnaire.

QUESTION 37-38. Transferring of license or permits

Currently, there are two different applications (Transfer of License or Permit to Youth Application and a Wolf License Transfer Application) and statutory authorities for the transfer of certain licenses or permits to another individual.

The Transfer of License or Permit to Youth Authority/Application allows a person who has purchased a spring turkey, fall turkey, bobcat, fisher, otter, upriver sturgeon spearing, class A bear hunting, sharp-tailed grouse or Horicon/Collins goose license or permit to transfer that authority to a youth 10-17 years of age. Currently, a youth may only be the recipient of each type of transferred permit once in their lifetime.

The Wolf Harvest License Transfer Authority/Application allows a person who has been awarded a wolf license to transfer that license to a minor who is under the age of 18, is eligible to use the approval, and has not been previously transferred a wolf harvest license. A youth may only be the recipient of a transferred wolf license once in their lifetime.

However, a person who has been awarded a wolf harvest license may also transfer that license to another person who is at least 18 years of age and is eligible to use the license, and there is no limit to the number of times an adult may receive a wolf harvest license which is transferred under this authority.

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In an effort to simplify the current license or permit transfer application process and expand opportunity by creating one application for all license or permit transfers:

37. Would you support legislation that would allow a person authorized to purchase a spring turkey, fall turkey, bobcat, fisher, otter, upriver sturgeon spearing, class A bear hunting, sharp-tailed grouse, Horicon goose or wolf harvest license or permit to transfer that license or permit to anyone that is eligible to use the license or permit?

This question passed in eleven counties and was rejected in sixty-one counties with 2,150 yes votes and 3,460 no votes. This question was not supported by the Conservation Congress at their annual convention in Rothschild on Friday May 9, 2014.

38. Would you support legislation that would allow a person authorized to purchase a spring turkey, fall turkey, bobcat, fisher, otter, upriver sturgeon spearing, class A bear hunting, sharp-tailed grouse, Horicon goose or wolf harvest license or permit to transfer that license or permit to any immediate relative (husband, wife, son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter) that is eligible to use the license or permit?

This question did pass in sixty-two counties and was rejected in ten counties with 3,421 yes votes and 2,164 no votes, and this question was supported by the Conservation Congress at their annual convention in Rothschild on Friday May 9, 2014.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress supports the transfer of certain fish and game approvals to persons with disabilities. We also support the transfer of Class A bear licenses to persons awarded the Purple Heart or serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces. However, we urge you to consider an amendment that allows the transfer of these harvest permits to any immediate relative (husband, wife, son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter) that is eligible to use the license or permit.

On behalf of our constituents that attended and voted in favor the above resolutions in 2012, 2013 and 2014, we respectfully request that you support the passage of AB44.

Rob Bohmann, Chair
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

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