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Appointment of the DNR Secretary

The Problem: The Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and the predecessor Conservation Department were appointed by the Natural Resources Board from 1928 until 1995, when the position became a political appointee of the Governor.

The Conservation Congress has long supported the restoration of the appointment authority of the DNR Secretary back to the Natural Resources Board. Historically there has been less political interference in natural resource management decisions under a Board appointed Secretary. Since the position has become a political appointee there has been far faster turnover in agency leadership and the position has been filled with people without a significant background in natural resource management.

Assembly Bill 138 and Senate Bill 113 have been introduced in the Wisconsin Legislature this session restoring the appointment authority of the DNR Secretary back to the Natural Resources Board. It will be very important to have the full Conservation Congress on record supporting the adoption of these bills by the Legislature and having the Governor sign the bills into law.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at is annual meeting held in Ontagamie County on April 13, 2009, recommends that the full Conservation Congress at its 2009 Annual Meeting in La Crosse, Wisconsin, vote to request that the Legislature pass legislation this legislative session restoring the appointment authority of the DNR Secretary back to the Natural Resources Board and that the Governor sign the legislation into law.

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