17-02-2013

Making the Conservation Congress Election & Vote Transparent & Accessible to All

The Problem:

The election of delegates to the Conservation Congress, which is supposed to represent all citizens, is little known and does not come under Wisconsin election laws. But it is the ONLY advisory put before the legislature and DNR as the will of the entire public.. If citizens do not show up this one night each year to vote and elect, they are not represented. The non-consumptive citizens have not been represented for 80 years. This is unfair and undemocratic.

To make the election accessible beyond the small turn-out of 5,000 citizens each year, statewide, to protect the biodiversity that is collapsing around us, and to open the entire process to a wide variety of citizen interests and concerns,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in every county on April 8, 2013, recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the Department to take action to correct this situation by separating the election from the vote on issues by combining the election with the statewide county votes, the first week of April. The issues would be debated by candidates announcing their candidacy before that, as in any election. So it could be candidates and issues announced publicly, then debated, then the election of candidates aligned with all the statewide county elections (simple walk-in vote at citizen convenience) and then a follow-up vote on the issues which have been debated in open forums.

The election of two of five delegates should be separated from the time-consuming vote on issues that excludes many people from participation. Absentee ballots should be a choice.

Submitted by (Name): Rick Hunestad

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County vote: Yes ✓ No: _____