

Wisconsin Conservation Congress Executive Committee Meeting Minutes



ORDER OF BUSINESS	March 3, 2016	12:30 p.m.	Teleconference
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY	WCC Chair Rob Bohmann at 12:30 p.m.
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Rob Bohmann, Larry Bonde, Joe Weiss, Lee Fahrney
EXCUSED	Dale Maas
UNEXCUSED	
GUESTS	Erin O'Brien, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Rachel Letzing, Wisconsin Legislative Council, Jayne Meyer, Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Tyler Winslow (Representative from Sen. Tiffany's office), Mike Hahn, Wisconsin Aquaculture Association.

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	N/A
ACTION	

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	N/A
ACTION	

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	N/A
ACTION	

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. [DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC]

[PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	<p>Discussion on Aquaculture Bills (AB 640/SB 493)</p> <p>Hahn: Regulations have put the aquaculture industry at a disadvantage compared to the rest of the country. Aquaculture has grown nationwide while it has shrunk in Wisconsin due to the regulatory burden. Applicants must get 8 to 9 permits to do business. E.g., Gollon Bait and Fish Farm spent 13 years to get permitting to construct a pond. Another member of the Association has been working for 7 years to obtain the required permits. Need to streamline the process so that everyone knows what the requirements are.</p> <p>Weiss: Maybe the reason we have good water is because we have a strong permitting process. Stated that Trout Unlimited is opposed.</p> <p>Bonde: Said TU is neutral.</p> <p>Bohmann: Does this bill allow construction on navigable waterways?</p> <p>Letzing: No</p>
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	<p>Bohmann: Does the bill allow fish farmers to divert water from headwaters? Letzing: The bill does not affect current law. Bohmann: Does it allow taking water from a stream? Letzing: A person who maintains an existing fish farm is not subject to low flow requirements. If navigable streams are affected, DNR can fix level to which navigable water can be drawn down. Bohmann: Does it allow fish farms to lower water quality standards? Letzing: According to best management practices, all water quality standards must be met. The provision regarding springs provides that an artificial water body being fed by a spring does not allow a spring to be used as a fish farm. The bill applies to a person who holds a fish farm permit and takes no other action other than fish farm operations. Bonde/Weiss: Asked about public access. Letzing: Not sure that the bill affects or changes anything regarding public access. Bonde: Stated concern about privatizing public waterways. Weiss: Voiced concern about a person in his area who has fish ponds in a stream based on an old permit and who won't allow access to the stream. Questions who will be in charge of compliance, DATCP or DNR? Letzing: Authority remains with DNR. Hahn: There is no switching of authority from DNR to DATCP. Said aquaculture is universally governed as a form of agriculture. The bill cleans up the definition of aquaculture. Weiss: Has DNR authority to enforce water quality requirements been lessened? Letzing: Removes some restrictions to their regulatory authority. Weiss: Are we going to follow up? Concerned about streamlining that may not be good for our resource. Fahrney: Express concerns about the viability of fish farm operators. He cited 13-year wait for permitting for installation of a pond at the Gollon Fish Farm as a concern.</p>	
ACTION	N/A	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	<p>Weiss asked about follow up. He stated the bill would be more acceptable to him if the changes that both TU and the Wisconsin Wetlands Association suggested were incorporated in the bill. Said TU was not in support of this bill as originally written. Bonde said TU did not take a position on the bill.</p>
ACTION	

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion by Bonde to adjourn; Second by Fahrney. Meeting adjourned at 1:08 p.m.
SUBMITTED BY	Lee Fahrney (acting secretary)
DATE	March 5, 2016