DATE: January 25, 2017

TO: Chair Hilgenberg, Secretary Stepp, and members of the Natural Resources Board

FROM: Larry Bonde, WCC Chair

SUBJECT: Congress Matters: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2017 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress District Leadership Council met on October 8, 2016, and January 6, 2017, to receive advisory committee reports and recommendations, review department proposed rule changes, and consider advanced citizen resolutions for possible inclusion in the DNR and WCC Annual Spring Hearing questionnaire.

I’d like to recognize and thank Gary Zimmer for his presence at the meeting. The Congress would like to acknowledge your continuing interest in our organization and reiterate our appreciation to all the members of the Natural Resources Board for your ongoing support.

Each year, at the January board meeting, the Conservation Congress presents the advisory questions which we have developed for the spring meeting’s questionnaire. These questions are the culmination of a year’s worth of work by our delegates, our committees, and ultimately by our District Leadership Council. We would like to thank Sanjay Olson, Kent Van Horn, Bob Nack, Scott Loomans, Justine Hasz, Todd Kalish, Todd Schaller, Matt O’Brien, and Fred Souba, for their presentations, and all of the department staff members for the time that they all put in to participate in this process.

The Congress’ District Leadership Council advanced 49 advisory questions to the annual spring meeting for citizens to weigh in on. The topics include everything from suggesting the state adopt the wild turkey as the state gamebird to increasing funding for...
aquatic fur bearer research and everything in between. Copies of the questions have been distributed, but I will just take a moment to highlight a few of them for you today.

The District Leadership Council advanced an idea from our Rules & Resolutions Committee to gauge the public’s interest in having the opportunity to provide input in the Spring Hearing process through an online option. While this is a question that is outside the comfort zone for many on the Congress, we understand that change is the only constant. Since our organization is charged with being a conduit for the public, so we thought it prudent we ask them for their input on how we can best provide that service.

A couple of the Fur Harvest Committee’s questions will ask attendees if they support expanding the timeframe in which landowners may use cable restraints for coyote, and the Deer & Elk Committee advanced a series of questions that asks citizens if they’d support several various options aimed at expanding the tools available to County Deer Advisory Councils to use in deer management.

The Legislative Advisory Committee is asking hearing attendees a number of questions on a wide variety of topics including, if they would support legislation that would allow disabled hunters to have the assistance of a person with a Class A hunting permit to pursue and dispatch an animal, if legally shot, wounded, and subsequently tagged by the disabled hunter.

The Warm Water Committee also forwarded a number of questions including one to gauge support for a rule that would simplify regulations by making the inland cisco daily bag limit consistent with that of outlying waters.

In addition to the advisory questions, the Spring Hearings will be an opportunity to provide the public with information on their County Deer Advisory Councils. We will once again be advising the CDAC chairs to briefly share with attendees the proposed quota recommendations for their county, where citizens can comment on those recommendations online, and when the CDAC meetings will be to finalize those recommendations.

We continue to work diligently on doing our best to provide accurate and as unbiased questions as possible for the public to react to, and we look forward to once again providing this opportunity for the public to get involved in the policy aspect of managing their natural resources.