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Tuesday, January 17, 2012

The Honorable Jeffery Mursau  
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
Room 18 North, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53708

RE: Assembly Bill 384 relating to weapons that may be used to hunt certain animals and requirements for establishing open hunting seasons for those animals

Dear Chair Mursau and members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee:

On Wednesday, January 18, 2012, the Natural Resources Committee of the Wisconsin Assembly will be holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 384. While the Wisconsin Conservation Congress does not have a position on this bill in its entirety, the WCC does have positions on portions of this proposed legislation.

The Conservation Congress has a position on **Section 3- 29.014 (1m) (b)** *If the department establishes an open season for hunting deer, elk, small game, wild turkey, or bear with a bow and arrow but not with a firearm, the department may not open that season for hunting with a crossbow except by a person who has attained the age of 65 or by a person who is authorized to hunt with a crossbow by a permit issued under s. 29.171 (4) (a) or 29.193 (2).*

At the 2010 Department of Natural Resources Annual Spring Fish & Wildlife Rule Hearings & Wisconsin Conservation Congress Annual County Meetings, the Congress asked **Question 86 – Lower crossbow eligibility age to 55**: *Would you support a statutory change that would allow hunters 55 years of age or older to use a crossbow for hunting without the need to obtain medical proof of a disability?* This question passed in 42 counties, failed in 25 counties and tied in 5 counties.

At the 2011 Department of Natural Resources Annual Spring Fish & Wildlife Rule Hearings & Wisconsin Conservation Congress Annual County Meetings, the Department asked **Question 41 – Lower the age at which anyone can use a crossbow from 65 to 55**: *Do you favor lowering the age at which anyone can use a crossbow from 65 to 55?* This question passed in 55 counties, failed in 16 counties and tied in 1 county.

The Congress supports lowering the age requirement from 65 to 55 in **Section 3- 29.014 (1m) (b)**. On behalf of our constituents that attended and voted in favor of this change in 2010 and 2011, we respectfully request that you please consider making an amendment to reflect this.

In 2011, the Congress also asked: **Question 48- Legalize Crossbows for Archery Season**: *Do you support the legalization of crossbows statewide for deer hunting during Wisconsin's archery season for hunters who possess a valid archery license with no additional age or disability restrictions?* This question passed in 13 counties, failed in 58 counties and tied in 1 county. Based on the input received from constituents at our 2011 Spring Hearings, the Congress does not support full inclusion for the use of crossbows during the archery deer season.

The Congress also has a position on **Section 6- 29.173 (2) (a)** amending it to read: *A resident deer hunting license authorizes the hunting of deer with ~~firearms only~~ a firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow.* In 2008, the Congress asked **Question 46: Use of Archery Equipment with a Gun Deer License: Do you support legislation that would modify the Gun Deer License to allow the use of Archery Equipment during the regular firearm deer seasons?** This question passed in 64 counties and failed in 8 counties. In 2011, the Congress again asked **Question 49- Use of Archery Equipment with a Gun Deer License: Do you support legislation that would modify the regular gun deer license to allow the use of archery equipment when hunting under the authority of this license during the any firearm deer seasons?** This question passed in 42 counties and failed in 30 counties.

The Congress supports the use of archery equipment under the authority of a resident and non-resident deer hunting license. On behalf of our constituents that attended and voted in favor of this change in 2008 and 2011, we respectfully request that you support **Section 6- 29.173 (2) (a)** and **Section 15- 29.211 (2)** as written in AB-384.

Respectfully,



Rob Bohmann, Chair  
Wisconsin Conservation Congress

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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.