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CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 27, 2016
TO: Chair Cole and members of the Natural Resources Board
FROM: Rob Bohmann, WCC Chair
SUBJECT: Congress Matters: Wisconsin Conservation Congress 2016 Spring Hearing Advisory Questions

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress Executive Council met on January 8-9, 2016 in Rothschild to receive study 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 Terry Hilgenberg 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 Executive Council. We would like to thank Tom Hauge, Justine Hasz, Todd Schaller, Paul Delong, and their staff members for the time that they all put in to participate in this process.

The Congress Executive Council advanced 33 advisory questions to the annual spring meeting for citizens to weigh in on. Copies of the questions have been distributed, but I will just take a moment to highlight a few of them for you today.

The Executive Council advanced an idea from our Rule Simplification Committee to gauge the public's interest in eliminating the "artificial-only" restriction from the 3% of trout stream miles that will have that regulation during the regular trout season.

One of the Environmental Committee's questions will ask attendees if they support requiring non-toxic shot on all department lands and another will address using non-toxic tackle under ½ ounce in weight.

The Land Use Committee advanced a question that asks citizens if they'd support re-designating a portion of the Strawberry Creek Fish Hatchery to allow it to be open for public use, while the Turkey & Upland Game Committee is asking if citizens support allowing unused spring turkey permits to be used during periods 5 and 6.

The Legislative Advisory Committee is asking hearing attendees if they would support a license fee increase as well as the opportunity for DNR customers to purchase gift certificates that could be used by others towards the purchase of DNR licenses, permits, or fees.

The Warm Water Committee forwarded a number of questions including one to gauge support for a rule that would eliminate the ability for persons who receive compensation for fishing activities to hold or store live fish with an unattended storage device beyond the day of catch.

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 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.

The January Executive Council meeting was also a chance for us to get an update from Art Lersch of the UW Extension on the progress the WCC is making on the implementation of the Congress' Strategic Plan. You may recall that the Congress embarked on its first ever strategic planning process in 2012. The plan identified four major goals for the Congress to work on; one goal being to create a greater awareness of the Conservation Congress and what we do. As we work to achieve these goals, I wanted to share with you a recent outreach effort that the Congress had undertaken. It is one step in an expanded outreach effort to get information about the Congress into the hands of a diverse group of citizens and encourage their participation in this organization. Once this is finalized, we will post it on the Congress website and delegates will have access to it so they can use it when they go out and give talks in their communities. We are also looking into other available options to get our message out that the Congress is interested in having people of all ages, ethnicities, and outlooks participate in our process.

(show WCC promotional video clip)

[WCC advisory questions for 2016 Spring Hearings](#)