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Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for holding this public hearing today and giving me the opportunity to speak to you in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 416. I would like to thank Senator Petrowski for working with me on this important legislation.

Deer hunting is one of Wisconsin's most important sporting traditions. Thousands of Wisconsinites take to the woods each fall throughout the various deer hunting seasons. Prior to the hunt, many hunters invest a great deal of time, energy, and money preparing for the season. When someone illegally harvests a deer, they are depriving a law-abiding hunter of an opportunity.

Hunters also provide an important economic boost to many small businesses around our state. As a small business owner in northern Wisconsin, I have seen this impact first-hand. Actions that negatively impact hunting also harm the many businesses who depend on hunting related business.

One of the penalties that can be imposed for poaching a deer is the wild animal protection surcharge. However, the maximum amount that can be imposed under current law is only \$43.75, regardless of the age or size of the animal. AB 416 increases the penalties under the wild animal protection surcharge for the illegal taking of trophy deer. Under this bill, the maximum penalty would increase to \$2,000 for a deer with antlers measuring between 125 and 149 inches, \$5,000 for a deer with antlers measuring between 150 and 169 inches, and \$10,000 for a deer with antlers measuring 170 inches or more.

These increased penalties are necessary because currently, the reward for poaching a trophy deer far outweighs the risks. Poachers are able to make thousands of dollars on the black market selling antlers and other parts of a trophy buck. For example, a 2012 article from the Los Angeles Times said, that according to breeders, a sample of semen from some bucks could sell for as much as \$35,000. Increasing the penalties for poaching trophy bucks would provide a greater deterrent to those who engage in these illegal activities.

Mr. Chairman and members, I ask for your support of AB 416 and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.