



JAMES W. EDMING

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 87TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 609

Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business, and Rural Issues

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Good morning committee members. I'm grateful for the opportunity to come before you today and speak in support of Senate Bill (SB) 609. I would like to thank Chairman Stafsholt for working with me on this important legislation.

Outdoor recreation is a Wisconsin tradition. As a lifelong resident of northern Wisconsin, I can say that Wisconsin is a great place to enjoy our state's sporting heritage. Not only are outdoor recreation activities like hunting a part of Wisconsin culture, but they also have a big impact on the local economy in many parts of our state. Unfortunately, the number of folks that take part in our state's sporting traditions, like hunting, has been on the decline in recent years. While there are a number of things that factor into this decline, as I talk with sportsmen and women in my district one of the concerns I've heard about is decreased hunting opportunities.

This bill seeks to address that by increasing the number of pheasants that the Department of Natural Resources is required to produce each year at the Poynette State Game Farm and requiring the department to create a schedule for stocking pheasants around the state. Under SB 609, stocking would occur on both public land and private land that is enrolled in a program that requires it to be open to public hunting.

A number of states to our west, like Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota have become destinations for pheasant hunters. There is no reason Wisconsin cannot become one as well. By stocking more pheasants here in our state we are not only increasing opportunities for Wisconsin hunters, but for out-of-state hunters as well. By encouraging more hunting in our state we will be helping to keep one of our state's sporting traditions strong while providing a boost to the state and local economies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today and I ask you to join me in supporting SB 609.