



For Immediate Release
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Legislative Fiscal Bureau Memo Shows Walker and Legislative Republicans Have Hollowed Out Staffing at DNR to 30-Year Low

Madison – Assembly Assistant Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released a memo from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau this week showing that staffing levels at the state’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have hit a thirty-year low. This comes at a time when many argue that the challenges facing our DNR have never been greater. Rep. Shankland released the following statement reacting to the data provided in the memo:

“The last time the DNR had staffing levels as low as they do today, I wasn’t even alive. I was extremely disappointed to learn that staffing levels at the DNR have hit a thirty-year low because of Governor Walker’s 2011, 2013, and 2015 Executive Budgets. According to the LFB, overall DNR authorized staffing levels have declined by 18% since its peak level in 1994-95.

“What’s even more disappointing is legislative Republicans, many from rural areas of the state, have continually moved in lock-step with the governor on his cuts to our DNR. This is the agency that is tasked with not only protecting, but also strengthening, our clean air, land, and water resources. The DNR is supposed to be the frontline steward of our natural resources to ensure Wisconsin taxpayers have opportunities to use our state’s public lands, fish in our waterways, and hunt in our forests for generations to come.

“The hollowing out of the DNR comes at a time when Wisconsinites are clamoring for action from the state to protect their natural landscapes. We have seen major concerns about the quality and quantity of fresh drinking water across our state. More and more invasive species are polluting our waterways and destroying our forests. Our state’s deer herd has fallen victim to a passive approach to mitigating the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease. It’s truly sad that despite these major concerns lawmakers hear from their constituents, legislative Republicans continue to pass budgets that are cutting staff at the DNR. What’s even more disappointing is that DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp appears to be openly advocating for additional staffing cuts to this vital agency in the next state budget.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues in the upcoming legislative session to invest in the invaluable staffing resources the DNR has lost over the last six years due to Governor Walker’s austere approach to managing our state’s unrivaled natural landscapes,” said Rep. Shankland.

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