

Chairman Cowles, Chairman Horlacher, and to the other members of the committees,

Thank you for the opportunity today to provide testimony on these concerning pieces of legislation.

My name is Nels Swenson from Oregon, Wisconsin and I am a national board member and volunteer state policy chair for Ducks Unlimited. I have invested my time and treasure to this organization for over 30 years and speak today on behalf of DU's 35,000 statewide members.

Through the commitment and leadership of our volunteers and members, Ducks Unlimited has conserved over 114,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitat in Wisconsin and spent nearly \$30 million on-the-ground achieving this. The legislation being considered today, undermines these efforts and will hinder our ability to ensure that waterfowl have the kind of landscape-level resources they need.

2017 marks DU's 80th anniversary as an organization committed to the conservation, restoration, and management of wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. DU was founded by a group of concerned waterfowlers who sprang into action to do something for a wildlife species in decline as result of over-harvest and the unregulated draining of America's landscape. Some of America's foremost conservation leaders have rotated through DU's staff and volunteer ranks over our history, each helping move the needle towards an America that respects and conserves its wetland resources for current and future generations.

It is for these reasons that DU strongly opposes AB 547 and SB 600, which would eliminate protections for the approximately 1 million acres of non-federal wetlands throughout Wisconsin. For the committee's knowledge, 70% of the mallards harvested by Wisconsin duck hunters are produced right here in Wisconsin using the type of wetland habitats that would be subject to destruction if this proposed legislation is passed into law. The potential impacts are unacceptable.

The sportsmen's heritage here in Wisconsin is strong. Over 1.5 million hunters and anglers enjoy our state's natural resources each year, spending over \$4 billion in pursuit of these activities and supporting 55,000 jobs. The legislation as written does unjust harm to resources that sustain wildlife species critically important to the sportsmen's community and so we ask that the committee oppose the bill in its current form.

Thank you all again for the opportunity to testify today and for your service to the state of Wisconsin.

Nels Swenson, RVP Region 3
Public Policy Chairman
Wisconsin Ducks Unlimited

