



WISCONSIN WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION

HABITAT RESTORATION EDUCATION LEGISLATION

Date: April 10, 2015

To: Representative Amy Loudenbeck
Joint Committee on Finance

Cc: Representative Al Ott & staff

From: Don Kirby, Executive Director – WWA

Re: Statement of support for Rep. Ott's budget amendment to increase the price of the Wisconsin duck stamp

Thank you Rep. Loudenbeck, for taking a moment to review this note. It is my great pleasure to give voice to the support of the volunteer board of directors, the vast majority of our membership, and the staff of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, to the budget amendment to increase the price of the Wisconsin duck stamp, to \$12.00, as recently proposed by Representative Al Ott.

Shortly after I took on my role with WWA, in late 2009, I began to realize the tremendous need in increasing the pool of funds generated by the duck stamp. The power of these monies, to support new wetland restoration projects, to repair & maintain our significant inventory of critical wetland infrastructure, and to help improve conditions in the waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada, will be greatly enhanced by making this increase, the first such increase since 1997.

I was a part of the team, along with our partners at Ducks Unlimited, and the WI Wildlife Federation, who advocated with waterfowl hunters, our members & friends, and the public at large, during 2010 and 2011, to make the need for an increase known, to all user groups. Their overwhelmingly positive response was humbling. Our working team made a concerted effort to make the desires of the user groups known to our legislators, but in the end, we were unsuccessful. Just last month, our team brought this issue to Madison again, and Representative Ott, showing tremendous leadership, has taken up our plea.

My commitment to you: the sportspeople who will pay this increased fee know what these segregated monies are used for, and as waterfowlers they are ready to continue to show our leadership in conservation funding, as we have since the onset of the Federal Migratory Bird Stamp, back in the 1930's. The combined efforts of many small contributions, will have a huge impact for all of us.

It's my hope that you will support this budget amendment, so we can make this happen. Thank you for your service to the people of Wisconsin, and for your attention to this important opportunity.