

Sen. Cowles, Mursau: Bill to reestablish the Conservation Corps passes committees

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Bill to Reestablish the Conservation Corps Passes Committees

MADISON- Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay) and Representative Jeffery Mursau (R-Crivitz) released the following statements after 2017 Senate Bill 648 and Assembly Bill 688 was recommended for passage by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy and the Assembly Committee on State Affairs during two separate hearings today:

Senator Cowles stated, “Countless projects on public lands are yet to be completed due to a lack of available funding or manpower. Today’s action by the Senate and Assembly Committees moves Wisconsin one step closer to cutting into this backlog and making necessary updates on public lands throughout the state. The projects completed by the Wisconsin Conservation Corps would be a huge benefit not only to the state’s natural resources and wildlife, but to the residents and tourists who spend time on public lands. The young adults completing these projects would have memorable outdoors experiences while gaining a new respect for our state’s natural resources. Furthermore, Senate Bill 648 and Assembly Bill 688 will help teach young

adults many of the job and life skills they need build a productive path for their future.”

Representative Mursau stated, “I’m thankful our colleagues in both houses voted to advance this important piece of legislation. The bills give young adults an opportunity to gain valuable education and work training, which can lead to future gainful employment. I’ve been inspired by the stories of individuals who came to the hearings and shared their past experiences. The Wisconsin Conservation Corps will enrich the participants’ lives and the State of Wisconsin will benefit from the valuable work they’ll accomplish.”

The Wisconsin Conservation Corps (WCC) was active from 1983 to 2003. Senate Bill 648 and Assembly Bill 688 revives the WCC with the goal of protecting, enhancing and providing access to Wisconsin’s natural heritage, and encouraging and enabling young people to learn the value of work in a natural setting by providing employment training and career pathways. Under this bill, work crews consisting of members between the ages of 16 and 25 would make up the WCC, with at least 50% of the work crew members coming from an impoverished background or with no post-secondary education. Projects would be completed on public or tribal lands throughout the state, with some of these projects including fencing, invasive species management, recreational site maintenance, stream bank stabilization, timber stand improvement, and trail construction or rehabilitation.