

State Rep. Sargent: Celebrating Wisconsin's rich history of conservation and outdoor heritage

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MADISON – Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) released the following statement to announce the introduction of LRB-2921, a bipartisan bill with Representative Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay), Senator Robert Cowles (R-Green Bay), and Senator Jeff Smith (D-Eau Claire) relating to fee waivers for state park vehicle admission receipts:

“As we celebrate Earth Day 2019, we also celebrate Wisconsin’s rich history of conservation and outdoor heritage. Wisconsin was the first state in our nation to create a state park, and is now home to 66 state parks. As it is the State Legislature’s responsibility to create and preserve state parks and natural areas, we must also ensure that their legacy carries on into the future.

By bringing our kids into our state parks we are planting seeds that will carry on the legacy of our public lands by teaching future generations how to preserve, conserve, and enjoy all that our shared resources have to offer. I know the impact that visiting our parks can have on our youth. I have seen the wonder in my own children’s eyes as they experience the majesty of the outdoors. I have seen my family at their happiest as we are together in the beautiful open spaces that Wisconsin is home to. I want each and every child in Wisconsin to have the same

opportunities for these experiences.

To help engage our next generation of state park visitors, supporters, and advocates, we are introducing LRB-2921, which provides an opportunity for each and every 4th grade student in Wisconsin to experience our state parks with their families. This bill would make available free vehicle admission sticker for the family of 4th grade students, thus allowing them to experience and enjoy the 66 state parks Wisconsin maintains.

Today, more than 80 percent of American families live in urban areas, and many lack easy access to safe outdoor spaces. At the same time, kids are spending more time than ever in front of screens instead of enjoying the outdoors. This bill's objective is to introduce kids to outdoor recreation through creating accessibility and awareness of our state's natural treasures, while also ensuring that future generations will carry on the legacy for our state parks for generations to come.

We can better understand our modern lives through the lens of the natural world. State parks let us look into the past and see our history. Keeping our state parks strong, accessible, and public, supports a healthy planet.”