

DNR Board won't seek outside counsel after members dropped from wolf suit

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Members of the Natural Resources Board took no action on seeking private legal counsel in a lawsuit aiming to ban this fall's wolf hunt.

Following a 90-minute closed session yesterday, Chair Frederick Prehn announced on a virtual call the board voted to not seek further legal counsel in the suit. The legal action argues DNR should suspend the fall wolf hunt until sufficient data on the existing wolf population is available and prevent any future wolf hunts from happening.

The suit, filed in state court on behalf of Great Lakes Wildlife Alliance and others, originally named Prehn and NRB members, but an Oct. 8 filing does not include them as defendants.

Claire Davis, who represents the environmental groups, also told WisPolitics.com they were dropped because the claims in the suit are against the whole department, not against any of its internal components.

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"We thus decided it was most appropriate to just direct our allegations against DNR and the person who leads DNR, Secretary Preston Cole," Davis wrote in an email.

DNR and Cole are the only remaining defendants in the suit.

The suit is one of two seeking to stop the fall wolf hunt following NRB members' decision to set the wolf hunt quota at 300. DNR later reduced it to 130, arguing it had authority to set the quota over NRB.

Timothy Preso told WisPolitics.com he and other lawyers representing six bands of the Ojibwe in a federal court action are not planning to remove Prehn and NRB members from their suit.

Environmental groups suing DNR and Cole allege in court filings the latest DNR-issued 130 quota for the fall wolf hunt is “reckless.”

The next court hearing for the lawsuit in state court is scheduled for Thursday at 1:30 p.m.