

# Prehn cancels Natural Resources Board meeting after DNR offers no agenda items

Posted on Friday, Sep 10, 2021

Frederick Prehn, fighting an attempt by Dem AG Josh Kaul to force him off the Natural Resources Board, canceled this month's meeting after the agency informed him it saw no issues that needed to be addressed and wouldn't provide staff if he proceeded with one.

Prehn, the Republican-appointed board chair whose six-year term expired in May, slammed what he said was a political move "contrary to state statutes, which say that the Department is under the direction and supervision of the NRB." He said the board's September meetings typically have a "robust agenda in the heart of the hunting seasons."

Last September the NRB discussed three informational items on wolf management, deer management and deer hunting.

"The NRB operates as partners with the Department, and without their participation we cannot do the work of the people of Wisconsin," Prehn added.

**>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

NRB Liaison Laurie Ross told WisPolitics.com since January 2000 the board has not canceled any meetings, but it has rescheduled meetings for weather, building and COVID-19 related issues.

Prehn sought to tie the agency decision to the fight over whether he can continue serving on the board. In a statement, Prehn said he didn't believe the department had ever before made such a decision and that nothing "like this happened the last time NRB members held over, pending Senate confirmation of their successors."

Kaul last month filed a lawsuit in Dane County Circuit Court in an attempt to force Prehn off the board. He requested a decision before the Sept. 21 meeting the board had planned.

See the DNR recommendation to Prehn [here](#).

In a hearing on the Kaul suit, Dane County Judge Valerie Bailey-Rihn denied motions Thursday by the GOP-led Legislature and Hunter Nation to intervene.

Bailey-Rihn said the interests of both the Legislature and Hunter Nation would be adequately represented by Prehn's counsel while the court interprets the statute that could determine whether he can be removed from the board or if Gov. Tony Evers has the power to replace him.

Hunter Nation's representation from WILL argued that the organization should be able to intervene due to the board's impact on the hunting community, but Bailey-Rihn said the DOJ's lawsuit pertains only to statutory interpretation, not the board's potential future decisions.

"This is a limited case with a limited issue," Bailey-Rihn said, noting that other outdoor activity groups likely have opinions on the board's decisions. "I can't believe that all these groups have the right to intervene as a matter of law in this very limited case."

She also said that the state is not challenging the Senate's role in confirming board appointees and the Legislature does not have an institutional interest in interpreting the statute.

"I don't think the Legislature needs to intervene in a random normal statutory interpretation," Bailey-Rihn said. "If I'm wrong, you can take it up with the Supreme Court, [where] I'm sure this is heading anyway."

Bailey-Rihn will issue a decision at a hearing on Sept. 20. She will ask questions to both sides, but will not hear evidence.