

# Rep. Milroy: Introduces free fishing weekend legislation for veterans

Posted on Monday, Nov 15, 2021

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State Representative Nick Milroy (D-South Range) has introduced Assembly Bill 694, a bill that would require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to designate the fourth full weekend in July as a free fishing weekend for veterans. During this special event weekend, the DNR would waive requirements for veterans to have a fishing license and pay fees to fish in Wisconsin. Milroy is co-authoring the bipartisan legislation with State Representative Ken Skowronski (R-Franklin), Chair of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs.

“Our veterans are immensely deserving of an opportunity where they can get out on Wisconsin’s beautiful waters and enjoy a summer weekend of fishing without the barriers of obtaining a fishing license or having to pay fees,” said Milroy.

Milroy was approached by the Western Lake Superior Trolling Association (WLSTA), an organization that takes dozens of veterans on a weekend fishing expedition on Lake Superior. The focus of this weekend is to give a unique fishing opportunity to veterans that would not otherwise have that opportunity. During the WLSTA veteran fishing weekend, the fishing is often done in either Wisconsin or Minnesota waters of Lake Superior depending on that weekend’s weather and fish distribution. Therefore, the WLSTA must work to ensure veterans on the trip are licensed in both states. This organization is also working with the Minnesota legislature to address this barrier.

According to Milroy, licensing is an obstacle that limits how many veterans are able to participate. “Fishing licenses and fees can serve as barriers to participation for individuals throughout the state as well,” continued Milroy. “Assembly Bill 694 helps

to address this issue for one weekend and would apply not just to the WLSTA, but to veterans and waters statewide.”

“Expanding access to the outdoors and supporting our veterans are both top-priority issues for me,” Milroy said. “This bill does both.”

“After the many sacrifices veterans have made on behalf of our country, it’s imperative that we do all we can to give back and honor them for their service,” Milroy concluded. “Providing veterans with a free fishing weekend of their own is just one small but important way that we can do just that.”