

Holperin

Senate

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Paid for by Holperin - Senate, Sandy Kinney, Treas.

Fishing License Check Off Should Help Fight Aquatic Invasives, Holperin Says

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A few simple changes to the Wisconsin fishing license “dollar donation” law could provide substantial new revenue to fight the aquatic invasive species that are endangering many northern lakes, said 12th State Senate District candidate Jim Holperin today.

Speaking at a regular meeting of the Forest County Association of Lakes in Crandon, Holperin said he believes between \$300,000 and \$400,000 in new revenue can be generated annually through the voluntary fishing license “check off” if revenue from the program is directed to the fight against aquatic invasives.

Under current law, those who buy a Wisconsin fishing license are asked at the time of purchase whether they would like to donate a dollar to “lake research”. “I’m not so sure the term ‘lake research’ has a much meaning to license buyers who probably wonder exactly what their contribution is used for,” Holperin said. Currently, only about 6% of fishing license buyers choose the dollar check off option, generating about \$60,000 annually.

“I think donations would spike if anglers were given the option to donate \$1 to the fight against aquatic invasives,” he said. Holperin said license buyers should also be given the option of donating more than \$1. “Those who buy a husband and wife license or a non-resident family license may want to donate \$1 per person rather than just \$1 per license, which is the only option right now,” he added.

In addition, Holperin said the legislature should direct the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to promote the check off, which many anglers don’t even know about. “There’s been no marketing of the check off at all and naturally, without advertising, there won’t be much interest or participation,” he said. He added that various fishing organizations and clean lakes groups should also be encouraged to help with promotion.

Holperin said that by directing the DNR to promote the check off, getting fishing and lakes groups involved, allowing people to donate more than \$1 per license and using the proceeds specifically to fight aquatic invasives, he believes between 35% and 40% of the 900,000 who buy Wisconsin fishing licenses every year could be persuaded to participate in the new invasive species check off.

“Anglers care about lakes and will help to keep them healthy if given the opportunity to do so,” Holperin concluded. “My plan will generate significant new revenue without any new fees or taxes, and the changes I propose can be in place in time for the 2009 fishing season.”