[118H7037]

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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to exclude certain populations of the lake sturgeon from the authority of such Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. WIED introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to exclude certain populations of the lake sturgeon from the authority of such Act.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Sturgeon Protected and Exempt from Absurd Regulations Act of 2025'' or the ''SPEAR Act of 2025''.

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN POPULATIONS OF LAKE STURGEON UNDER ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The lake sturgeon (Acipenser fulvescens) holds a special place in the cultural fabric of Wisconsin, especially for the communities located on Lake Winnebago and the Winnebago System.

(2) Through the staunch dedication and close public-private collaboration of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Sturgeon for Tomorrow, the Sturgeon Advisory Committee, the Sturgeon Guard, and local fishing, sportsmen, and conservation groups, Wisconsin has become the global leader in lake sturgeon management.

(3) As a result of these efforts and the development and implementation of a comprehensive management plan, the Lake Winnebago system is home to a thriving lake sturgeon population, one of the largest in North America, and the most successful sustainable sturgeon fisheries in the world.

(4) An integral component of this management plan is the annual sturgeon spearing season that is meticulously managed and provides the data necessary, along with data from detailed spawning assessments, to maintain an accurate account of popu-

lation levels needed and allowable maximum harvest rates to ensure the health and sustainability of the species.

(5) Mandatory registration stations are established to collect detailed data on the length, weight, sex, and tag status of each harvested fish and ensure strict seasonal harvest caps are followed.

(6) The spearing season has grown into a unique cultural event filled with strong traditions and community ties, drawing participants from throughout Wisconsin and many other States, and is crucial to the livelihoods of local communities and small businesses near the Winnebago System who rely on the annual season.

(7) It is vital that this long-standing and cherished tradition be protected and that Wisconsin is allowed to continue its successful Winnebago System and statewide management of lake sturgeon.

(b) EXCLUSION FROM LISTING.—Section 4(a) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''The Secretary shall by regulation'' and inserting ''Except as provided in paragraph (4), the Secretary shall by regulation''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) APPLICABILITY TO LAKE STURGEON.—The Secretary may not make a determination under this subsection that any population of the lake sturgeon (Acipenser fulvescens) in Wisconsin is threatened or endangered.''.