



February 7, 2021

RE: HF 387: Modifications of Turtle Taking Provisions

Dear Chair Hansen and members of the House Environment committee,

Women Observing Wildlife-MN is a fledgling organization whose mission is: To promote the observation of wildlife as a healthy recreational, educational, and scientific endeavor, in such a manner that does not disturb wildlife from their natural processes.

We are writing in support of HF 387 as it will diminish the commercial “harvest” of Turtles offering the nine species of Turtle that call Minnesota home an opportunity to grow and re-establish viable populations. As you know two species of Turtle, the Blanding’s and Wood Turtles are Threatened and both the Snapping and the Spiny Soft Shell Turtles are Special Concern species.

Turtles as have existed, according to the fossil record, for over 220 Million years. However, as with many other species, Turtles are threatened with extinction: 45% of Turtle species are disappearing from the planet at an alarming rate. A commercial harvest of Turtles is not needed for human food and certainly not for exportation of Turtles as pets or to be used as trinkets, e.g. in China, live Turtles are encased in plastic and carried as some sort of accessory.

There are many things we can do to prevent the extinction of Turtles in Minnesota. For example, protecting and restoring water quality, protecting upland Turtle habitat and helping Turtles cross the road. Halting the commercial harvest, which most other states have already done is but one step, but important to protect this valuable and ancient Animal.

Sincerely,

Catherine Zimmer
Executive Director
Women Observing Wildlife-MN
Wow-mn@usfamily.net