



# *Wisconsin Aquaculture Association, Inc.*

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## **Governor Walker Signs New Aquaculture Bill Into Law 2011 Wisconsin Act 207 Effective Monday April 16**



*staff photo*

On Monday April 2, Governor Walker signed the Aquaculture Bill, officially called 2011 Wisconsin Act 207. In addition to having a significant impact on lessening regulations, this bill also has the distinction of being one of the most supported, uncontested bills in recent legislative sessions. It had broad bipartisan co-sponsorship and passed the full legislature unanimously.

This bill has significant features for Wisconsin aquaculture relating to Natural Water Body permits, record confidentiality, import permits, sales records, and permits and fees impacting some commercial farms:

- 1- Natural Water Body Permit does not expire (this is no longer a recurrent renewal date) unless the department determines that there has been a substantial change in circumstances. There will also be no public hearings or no notice given to any person other than the applicant before issuing a natural waterbody permit.
- 2- There will be confidentiality of records relating to information kept by the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (WVDL) relating to identification of fish farms or testing results except if the laboratory determines it is necessary to protect public health, safety or welfare.

- 3- In general, you can now import fish or fish eggs into Wisconsin without an import permit, if they are from a fish farm, are going to a registered Wisconsin fish farm, and have a fish health certificate. There will still be import permits for fish or fish eggs that are going directly into waters of the state including activities for the Department of Natural Resources.
- 4- Fish farms are still required to keep records on purchases, sales and production of fish and fish eggs, but now records will not be required for sales of fish to an individual for the individual's personal use (these fish or fish eggs cannot be introduced into a public water body).
- 5- Fish farms (and State Hatcheries) that previously were required to have a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit will now be issued permits in accordance with Concentrated Aquatic Animal Production Facilities (CAAPF) as listed by the Federal Government in 40 CFR 451.10-451.11. Of important notice, these permits are best management based, and the requirements cannot be more stringent than the federal rules; additionally, no fees can be charged as previously done under the wastewater discharge environmental section.

This legislation, along with the pending changes to DATCP's Animal Health Rules (due out this June), will provide a more positive business climate for aquaculture in the state by encouraging existing farms to invest in expansion and spurring growth in new start up farms; this will contribute to more aquaculture production, increase jobs and the state's economy.

For more specifics on Act 207, go to <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/acts/207> or call one of the Aquaculture Extension Specialists (Ron Johnson 715-373-2990, or Jim Held 920-648-2902)

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*The Voice of Wisconsin Aquaculture*