

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 122 (Delegate Schisler)
 Environmental Matters

Natural Resources - Wild Waterfowl Hunting - Shoreline Licenses

This bill increases the length of time, from one year to five years, that a riparian shoreline license issued by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is valid. The bill increases the fee for the license from \$20 to \$100. For licenses issued to riparian landowners, in addition to mailing a renewal notice at least one month before the license expires, as required by current law, DNR would be required to: (1) mail each licensee a copy of the current license by June 30 of each year; and (2) include a renewal notice with the copy of the current license sent in the year before the license expires. DNR would no longer have to mail renewal notices annually.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues would increase by \$260,000 in FY 2004 and decrease by \$70,000 annually from FY 2005-2007 due to the change in the timing of the licensing program. Revenues would not be affected in FY 2003 due to delayed implementation. The bill's impact on expenditures cannot be reliably estimated.

(in dollars)	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007
SF Revenue	\$0	\$260,000	(\$70,000)	(\$70,000)	(\$70,000)
SF Expenditure	0	-	-	-	-
Net Effect	\$0	\$260,000	(\$70,000)	(\$70,000)	(\$70,000)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Owners of riparian property in Maryland may license their riparian shoreline to establish offshore stationary blinds or blind sites for hunting wild waterfowl and to prevent other people from licensing the riparian shoreline for the purpose of hunting wild waterfowl offshore. An applicant for a license must submit an application, a map, the written permission of adjacent landowners, if necessary, and the written lease or assignment of the riparian landowner, if necessary, to DNR. The application fee is \$20. A unit of government is exempt from the fee. Funds collected must be used to administer the licensing program. Any funds not expended in a fiscal year for administering the licensing program revert to the general fund.

Licenses are valid until June 30 of the following year. At least one month before a license expires, DNR must mail a renewal notice and a renewal application to all riparian landowners who received a license the previous year. Before the license expires, the licensee may renew the license for an additional one-year term if the licensee is otherwise entitled to be licensed, pays a renewal fee of \$20, and submits a renewal application.

A Maryland resident or a person who owns riparian property in Maryland, regardless of State residency, may apply to DNR to license shoreline for the purpose of establishing an offshore blind site. An applicant must submit an application and a signed statement with specified information to DNR. The application fee is \$20 for each license requested. Licenses are valid until June 30 of the following year and shall be issued in the order the applications are received in person.

Background: DNR issues approximately 1,500 shoreline licenses annually to riparian landowners and another 2,000 annually to nonlandowners (squatters) to establish offshore stationary blinds or blind sites for hunting wild waterfowl and to prevent other people from licensing the riparian shoreline.

The Waterfowl Project in DNR is responsible for the management of 25 waterfowl species. The goal of the program is to ensure sustainable waterfowl populations that provide recreational opportunities. Based on the 2001 midwinter waterfowl survey, the total waterfowl counted in Maryland in 2001 was 879,000. During the 1999 hunting season, DNR reports that 17,900 adult waterfowl hunters spent 180,500 days hunting waterfowl in Maryland. Maryland hunters bagged approximately 266,400 ducks and more than 37,000 geese.

State Revenues: The bill replaces the current annual licensing process with a five-year licensing process. The bill also increases the license fee from \$20 per year to \$100 every five years. Currently, DNR issues approximately 1,500 licenses to riparian landowners

and 2,000 licenses to squatters annually. At \$20 each, the annual revenue from these licenses totals approximately \$70,000. Due to the change in the timing of payments, the bill would result in an increase in special fund revenues in the first year the increase is effective, and a decrease in special fund revenues in years two through five.

The bill takes effect October 1, 2002. However, by that date, DNR would have already issued shoreline licenses for fiscal 2003. It is assumed, therefore, that DNR would not implement the bill's requirements until the fiscal 2004 licensing season. Accordingly, special fund revenues would not be affected in fiscal 2003. In fiscal 2004, special fund revenues would increase by approximately \$260,000; in fiscal 2005 through fiscal 2007, special fund revenues would decrease by approximately \$70,000. This estimate assumes:

- the number of shoreline licenses issued to squatters will decrease by approximately 10% due to the change in the licensing process; and
- the number of new licenses issued annually would be negligible.

Under current law, any funds from the sale of riparian landowner shoreline licenses not expended in a fiscal year revert to the general fund. Assuming DNR spends all revenues it receives from those licenses in any given fiscal year, general fund revenues would not be affected.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

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