

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 775

(Senator Simonaire, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

Natural Resources - Recreational License Donation Program - Establishment

This bill establishes a program through which a person may purchase and donate an angler’s license, a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license, or a hunting license and any corresponding stamps. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may then issue a donated license or stamp, at no cost, to a “Gold Star recipient,” a disabled veteran, a disabled member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a permanently disabled person who requires the use of a wheelchair. A recipient of a donated license/stamp must meet other specified requirements. The bill also establishes a Recreational License Donation Fund into which the revenue collected from donated licenses and stamps is deposited. DNR must implement the donation program at or before the beginning of hunting license sales for the 2017-2018 hunting license year. DNR must submit a specified report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2018.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2019.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund expenditures for DNR increase by \$25,000 in FY 2017 only for programming changes to COMPASS, DNR’s licensing database. Otherwise, DNR can implement the bill, including submitting the required report, with existing resources. State revenues are not anticipated to be materially affected, as discussed below.

(in dollars)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	25,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$25,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Bill Summary: A recipient of a donated license or stamp must be sponsored by a qualifying nonprofit charitable organization that provides recreational hunting or fishing opportunities for Gold Star recipients, disabled veterans, disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or permanently disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair. In addition, a recipient of a donated hunting license is subject to specified statutory hunting safety requirements. Only one eligible person may hunt under the authority of a donated license or stamp during one recreational license year.

The bill establishes a Recreational License Donation Fund in DNR to provide recreational hunting and fishing opportunities for Gold Star recipients, disabled veterans, disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and permanently disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair. The fund consists of revenue collected from the purchase and donation of recreational hunting or fishing licenses or stamps, money appropriated in the State budget to the fund, and any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the fund. Interest earnings must be credited to the general fund. The fund may be used only for donated recreational hunting or fishing licenses or stamps for use by the entities described above. Expenditures from the fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget.

DNR is authorized to issue a donated stamp to an eligible resident or nonresident of the State. DNR must (1) post names of donators (unless they request anonymity) on its website beginning October 1, 2017, and annually thereafter and (2) adopt implementing regulations, including regulations that establish eligibility requirements. The required report must include specified program information, including the number and types of licenses and stamps donated, sponsoring charitable organizations, accounting details, and any other information that DNR deems relevant.

A “Gold Star recipient” is defined as a recipient of the U.S. Department of Defense Gold Star for surviving spouses, parents, and next of kin of members of the U.S. Armed Forces who lost their lives in combat.

Current Law/Background: DNR issues various types of hunting and fishing licenses and associated stamps. These licenses can be purchased online through DNR’s COMPASS portal. Although licenses are generally required to hunt or fish in the State, there are certain exceptions. For example, a person serving in the U.S. Armed Forces who has a service-connected disability and possesses a valid military identification while hunting is

not required to hold a hunting license, and a Maryland resident who is on leave from active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces is not required to hold a hunting or a fishing license. In addition, a retired former member of the U.S. Armed Forces hunting on active farmland is not required to hold a hunting license under specified conditions.

State Revenues: Because donated licenses and stamps must still be purchased prior to donation, special fund revenues are not materially affected. This assumes that the bill itself does not result in a material increase in the number of licenses and stamps purchased, and that recipients of the donated licenses and stamps would have purchased their own licenses and stamps in the absence of the bill. Fee revenue from the donated licenses and stamps is merely deposited into the new fund established by the bill rather than the existing special funds within DNR that currently receive that revenue.

The bill's provision that directs interest earnings of the new fund to the general fund is not anticipated to materially affect general fund revenues.

State Expenditures: DNR's special fund expenditures increase by \$25,000 in fiscal 2017 only to make programming changes to its COMPASS licensing database system in order for DNR to accept and track donations and post specified information on its website, as required by the bill. Otherwise, DNR can implement the bill, including submitting the required report, with existing budgeted resources.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 4, 2016
min/lgc Revised - Senate Third Reader/Clarification - March 29, 2016
Revised - Enrolled Bill - May 9, 2016

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