



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – House Bill 755 – Natural Resources –
Complimentary License – Disabled Veterans***

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources respectfully provides the following information on House Bill 755. This bill will reduce the qualifying percentage of disability needed for the Department to issue a complimentary anglers license to a Maryland resident that is certified as a service connected disabled American veteran.

The department is pleased to currently provide complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to residents who were wounded in combat and declared 100% service-connected disabled or a former Prisoner of War. Service-connected disability is determined by the Veterans Administration and is defined as a veteran who was disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service related and range from 10% to 100% service-connected.

In addition, the department provides opportunities for individuals to donate to the Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund. The Healing Hunting and Fishing Fund is administered by the Chesapeake Bay Trust who then makes grants to eligible sponsors who provide recreational hunting and fishing opportunities for veterans. The goal of the department and the Chesapeake Bay Trust is to follow the science that being outdoors promotes healing in individuals recovering from physical and mental trauma or health issues.

Since the bill took effect last July, the department has received 1,083 donations totaling over \$5,200. The bill sponsor is currently working with the Chesapeake Bay Trust on potentially expanding the program.

HB 755 would have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources resulting in an estimated loss of approximately \$71,000 annually. In addition, as these licenses can only be issued by the Department's Licensing and Registration Service centers, small businesses acting as Sport License Agents, could lose an undetermined amount of revenue as a result.

Thank you for allowing the department to submit this information on HB 755 for the committee's careful consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Service