

HB0715_DNR_SUP_ENT_2-21-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 21, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 715 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to Be Unemployable

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The agency supports House Bill 715. Although there is a potential small negative fiscal impact to the agency, by including individuals who are not 100% service connected disabled veterans, but are 100% unemployable due to their service connected disability, it clarifies an often confusing difference between types of service connected disabled veterans applying for the complimentary license. The agency is familiar with the paperwork related to both classifications from the U.S. military and can easily make adjustments in our licensing system to accommodate the change.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The agency does issue complimentary licenses to former prisoners of war, 100% service connected disabled American veterans, certain government individuals such as the President of the United States and state governors. Additionally, the state has free fishing areas

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would make recreational fishing licenses free veterans who are deemed unemployable due to their service related disability.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

MGAVC24_HB715.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike Delegate Rogers

Position: FAV



MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
VETERANS CAUCUS

TO: Chair Marc Korman
Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Maryland Veterans Caucus, House Membership

DATE: February 5, 2024

RE: **HB0715 - Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable**

The Maryland Veterans Caucus, House Membership respectfully requests a favorable report on **HB0715 - Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable**

This bill was sponsored by Delegate Mike Griffith for the purpose of removing the license fee (applied by the Department of Natural Resources) for veterans deemed unemployable for the following licenses: angler license, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing, and hunting.

The Veterans Caucus mission is to study, develop, and promote legislation designed to improve the quality of life for veterans in the State of Maryland in the areas of employment, education, economics, training, and health. And to assist the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in achieving its mission and goals, on behalf of the veterans in the State.

The Veterans Caucus Legislative Review Board offers and **recommends support and a favorable report of HB0715.**

Thank you,

Mike Rogers

Delegate Mike Rogers
House Chair, Veterans Caucus

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To study, develop, and promote legislation designed to improve the quality of life for veterans in the State of Maryland in the areas of benefits, employment, education, economics, training, and health, and to assist the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in achieving its mission and goals, on behalf of all veterans in the State.

HB 715 - Fishing&Hunting - Complimentary Licenses&

Uploaded by: Morgan Murphy

Position: FAV



**Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Secretary**

**WES MOORE
GOVERNOR**

**ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR**

**ANTHONY C. WOODS
SECRETARY**

February 21, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 715 - Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable.

Dear Chairman Korman and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs supports HB 715 - Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps - Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption - Veterans Determined to be Unemployable. We were pleased to see HB 715 introduced in this session, and wholeheartedly support allowing unemployable veterans to receive complimentary fishing and hunting licenses.

Studies show that getting outside to engage in outdoor activities, such as fishing and hunting, can be beneficial in treating mental health issues common to veterans, including post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety. This type of outdoor therapy will help unemployable veterans reconnect with nature and find peace outside in our beautiful State.

We respectfully request a favorable report on HB 715. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony C. Woods
Secretary

THE WINELAND BUILDING, FOURTH FLOOR
16 FRANCIS STREET, ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

TOLL FREE: 866-793-1577 • ANNAPOLIS: 410-260-3838 • FAX: 410-216-7928

veterans.maryland.gov
TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

2024 MD HB 715 - Free Hunting Fishing Licenses -

Uploaded by: Kaleigh Leager

Position: FWA



**To: Hon. Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401**

Re: House Bill 715 – Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps – Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption – Veterans Determined to be Unemployable

Position: Encourage Amendments

Date: 2/21/2024

Chairman Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Honorable Members of the Maryland State House Environment and Transportation Committee

As the Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge you to amend House Bill 715 (HB 715) Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps – Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption – Veterans to be Determined Unemployable, to include a provision that provides the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a reimbursement model for discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses within the State of Maryland. Such a reimbursement model would not only solve the loss of conservation funding for this bill, but also all discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses in the future. While CSF appreciates the intent of this bill, we cannot support this bill in its current form.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Sportsmen and women provide, on average, nearly 60% of the funds used by state fish and wildlife agencies to carry out their critical conservation missions through the “user pays – public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). For example, revenue from the sale of fishing licenses in Maryland goes directly to the DNR for their use in fisheries and habitat management, and also to provide quality and safe access points for residents and non-residents alike to enjoy Maryland’s waters.

Along with fishing and hunting license revenues, the Pittman-Robertson (PR) and Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

(DJ/WB) Acts are two ASCF cornerstones that authorize federal funding for state fish and wildlife agencies to manage and restore fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. The distribution of these funds is formula-based, and dependent on the size of the state and the number of paid hunting and fishing license holders. To be counted as a certified paid license, the state agency must demonstrate a net profit on the sale (once overhead, processing, and admin costs are considered). This means that states that distribute free, or in some cases heavily discounted licenses, are losing funds both from the initial revenue of license sales, as well as from funds that would otherwise have been apportioned under PR and DJ/WB. To compensate for this, some states have enacted legislation that reallocates funds from the state general fund to compensate the state fish and wildlife agency for the lost revenue.

Tennessee provides a great example of an amendment that could be added to this bill to protect conservation funding to the MD DNR: Tennessee [Title 70, Chapter 2, § 70-2-104](#): *“The agency shall be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses created by statute on or after January 1, 2017, in an amount equal to the discounts received.”*¹

The increased costs of goods and services in today’s economy are also impacting states’ abilities to manage their fish and wildlife populations and habitats. During the 2023 Legislative Session, the legislature passed a comprehensive bill that CSF supported, increasing the costs of hunting licenses and stamps to provide the DNR with additional revenue to help meet the increasing costs for managing fish and wildlife, and their habitats. Continuing to provide free and discounted licenses without a reimbursement model is detrimental not only to our natural resources and their management, but also to our current and future sportsmen and women of the Old-Line State.

In closing, the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation understands and appreciates the intent of this bill and realizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the ability to provide healthy and affordable meal options for families, especially to individuals and families that are less financially secure or who have served our nation. However, offering free and discounted licenses limits the ability of the DNR to fund their conservation work, which benefits all residents. To protect the integrity of sportsmen-generated dollars through the ASCF, we encourage you to work towards providing statutory protections against lost conservation dollars by amending this legislation to require the agency be reimbursed from the general fund for any free license the legislature decides to implement. For these reasons, we ask you to amend HB 715, and with such amendments included we will gladly lend our strong support towards the bill’s passage.

Sincerely,



Kaleigh E. Leager
Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States | Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
110 North Carolina Ave, SE | Washington, DC 20003
kleager@congressionalsportsmen.org | 202-543-6850 X 20

¹ [Reimbursement to Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses](#)

HB715_Griffith_Amendment

Uploaded by: Mike Griffith

Position: FWA



HB0715/693029/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

20 FEB 24
13:39:07

BY: Delegate Griffith

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 715

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2 in line 21, and on page 4 in line 15, in each instance, strike “**ITEM (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH**” and substitute “**PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION**”.

On page 5, in line 16, strike “**ITEM 1 OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH**” and substitute “**SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH**”.