

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1236 (Delegate Donoghue. *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Fisheries and Wildlife Endowment Funds - Lifetime Licenses

This bill establishes the Fisheries Endowment Fund in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for fisheries conservation, preservation, and management programs of DNR and administration of a resident lifetime consolidated sport fishing license program. DNR must issue a resident lifetime consolidated sport fishing license and establish fees for this license sufficient to ensure the long-term financial security of the Fisheries Endowment Fund. The fund shall consist of fees collected from the sale of resident lifetime consolidated sport fishing licenses as well as gifts, grants, and contributions to the State that are designated for the fund.

This bill also establishes the Wildlife Endowment Fund for DNR's wildlife conservation, preservation, and management programs and administration of the resident lifetime consolidated hunting license program. The bill requires DNR to issue a resident lifetime consolidated hunting license and establish fees sufficient to ensure the long-term financial security of the Wildlife Endowment Fund. The fund shall consist of fees collected from the sale of resident lifetime consolidated hunting licenses as well as gifts, grants, and contributions to the State that are designated for the fund.

The bill also provides that DNR may issue both of these licenses, without charging a fee, to a Maryland resident who certifies that he or she is a former prisoner of war or a 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

This bill takes effect August 1, 1998.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential indeterminate increase in special fund revenues and expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: The bill establishes two new special funds and two new types of sport licenses within DNR. DNR is to set the fees for these new licenses by regulation and at such a level that is “sufficient to ensure the long-term financial security” of the funds. The bill also provides that the funds consist of licensing fees, gifts, grants, or donations to the State that are designated for inclusion in the respective funds. At this time, there is no basis upon which to reliably estimate the amount of revenue that could be generated by the sale of consolidated fishing and hunting licenses because it is unknown how many individuals would choose to participate and what the fees for these licenses would be. In addition, it is difficult to estimate the amount of funds that would be donated to the two new special funds.

As a point of reference, in 1996 DNR issued 96,734 consolidated resident hunting licenses (\$2,273,717), 8,988 basic resident hunting licenses (\$135,424), 916 senior lifetime hunting licenses (\$10,988), and 1,807 senior annual hunting licenses (\$1,374). DNR also issued 168,001 resident nontidal fishing licenses (\$1,602,121), 18,290 senior resident consolidated fishing licenses (\$83,142), and 147,228 resident Bay sport fishing licenses (\$957,201). Funds raised from hunting and fishing sport licenses are deposited in the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund and the Fisheries Management and Protection Fund, respectively.

DNR’s expenditures would increase by an indeterminate amount in order to pay for conservation and preservation programs as well as for administering the two new licensing programs.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 1998

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