

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Revised

House Bill 1187 (Delegates Guns and Weir)

Environmental Matters

Natural Resources - Wild Waterfowl - Issuance of Fishing and Hunting Licenses

This bill transfers all responsibility for the issuance of specified hunting and fishing licenses from the clerks of the circuit courts to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or its designated agents. The department is prohibited from delegating the authority to issue a fishing or hunting license to a clerk of a circuit court.

The bill also revises current law relating to the hunting of wild waterfowl. It alters the procedure for the licensing of offshore blind sites and stationary blind sites, including eligibility requirements and location requirements. DNR, instead of local clerks of the courts, will be responsible for the licensing of blinds. The department must conduct licensing through the mail and through the use of regional service centers or other designated areas.

Only persons owning 250 yards of continuous shoreline may erect an offshore stationary blind, unless a riparian owner owning less than 250 yards of shoreline obtains the approval of an adjacent riparian landowner. Blind sites must be at least 250 yards apart from each other and at least 125 yards from a dwelling. Riparian land owners may lease or assign their rights to an offshore stationary blind or blind site.

The bill requires the department to locate and construct blinds on public land so that the public may be provided greater access to and use of wild waterfowl. Finally, the department must encourage local and federal governments to make land under their jurisdictions available to the public for the hunting of wild waterfowl.

This bill takes effect May 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenue increase of approximately \$24,900 beginning in FY 2001 as a result of the bill's May 1, 2000 effective date. Enforcement would continue with DNR's existing resources.

(in dollars)	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
SF Revenues	\$0	\$24,900	\$24,900	\$24,900	\$24,900
SF Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Effect	\$0	\$24,900	\$24,900	\$24,900	\$24,900

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

Local Effect: Minimal reduction in local revenues and corresponding expenditures.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Currently, local clerks of the circuit courts only issue blind site licenses. In 1997, 4,150 blind site licenses at a cost of \$11 each were purchased through clerks. Under current law, a clerk of a court keeps \$1 from each license sold; thus the revenue collected by DNR from blind site licenses in 1997 was \$41,500. This bill would transfer the responsibility of issuing licenses from the clerks of the courts to DNR. This would result in all revenues collected from blind site licenses going to DNR.

Under current law, landowners with more than 500 yards of shoreline are required to file a separate application and pay an \$11 fee for each site. The bill allows landowners to file one application and pay one fee for multiple sites located on their property. The bill also raises blind site license fees from \$11 to \$20. DNR advises that approximately 20% of licenses sold are to landowners with multiple sites on one property. As a result of the \$10 increase for each license sold and the revenue loss associated with multiple site licenses, DNR estimates that it will gain \$24,900 in licensing fees beginning in fiscal 2001.

The bill also requires DNR to send a renewal notice to all riparian landowners who received a license or whose shoreline was excluded from blind site licensing by the public the previous year. DNR advises that the printing of applications and the postage required would cost approximately \$1,200 annually beginning in fiscal 2001 and could be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The clerks of the courts will lose \$4,150 in revenue from the issuing of

licenses which would be offset by a reduction in expenditures associated with issuing licenses.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History:

First Reader - March 22, 1999

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Revised - House Third Reader - April 12, 1999

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