

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 406 (Chairman, Environmental Matters Committee)
(Departmental - Natural Resources)

Environmental Matters

Deer Hunting - Bonus Stamps

This departmental bill codifies existing regulations by allowing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue a limited number of bonus antlerless deer stamps for the purpose of regulating the harvest of antlerless deer in a particular deer management region or zone. The bill establishes a non-refundable application fee of \$5 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents to participate in a lottery for the limited number of stamps. Under current regulations, the fee is refundable if an applicant does not receive a stamp in the lottery. The bill provides that if an individual obtains a bonus antlerless deer stamp, the application fee will be applied to the fee for the stamp, which, under current law, is \$5 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. The bill also clarifies existing provisions relating to bonus deer stamps to make current law consistent with existing regulations.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2000.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Increase in special fund revenues of at least \$650 annually beginning in FY 2001 because DNR would no longer have to issue refunds for applicants not receiving stamps. Minimal decrease in special fund expenditures because DNR would no longer have to process those refunds.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: DNR has determined that this bill will have minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: A person with a specified hunting license may purchase bonus deer stamps from DNR. A bonus deer stamp allows the person to hunt one extra deer for each stamp purchased. Chapter 763 of 1998 (SB 257) amended DNR's bonus deer stamp program to allow a hunter who purchases a bonus deer stamp to use the stamp in any of the three deer hunting seasons. The fee for each bonus deer stamp is \$5 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. Current regulations implementing the bonus deer stamp program provide for a bonus antlerless deer stamp program in specified regions within the State. All fees are paid into the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund.

Background: Under regulations implementing Chapter 763 of 1998, DNR sells both bonus deer stamps and bonus antlerless deer stamps. The bonus antlerless deer stamp program operates as a lottery. An applicant pays the fee but may or may not actually receive a stamp. However, current law does not allow DNR to keep the fee if the applicant does not receive a stamp. As a result, DNR must refund the fee to those applicants not receiving stamps in the lottery.

According to DNR, over 9,000 individuals applied for bonus antlerless deer stamps in 1999. DNR advises that it issued refunds to 130 residents at a total of \$650 in 1999. DNR reports that it does not track refunds issued to nonresidents. Of the 8,960 individuals who received stamps, about 8,800 were residents and 160 were nonresidents. In 1999, revenue from the stamps (net of refunds) was approximately \$48,000 (resident: 8,800 stamps x \$5 = \$44,000 / nonresident: 160 stamps x \$25 = \$4,000).

State Fiscal Effect: DNR advises that it issued refunds to 130 residents at a total of \$650 in 1999. DNR reports that it does not know how many refunds, if any, were issued to nonresidents. Because DNR would no longer have to issue refunds for applicants not receiving stamps, special fund revenues could increase by at least \$650 annually beginning in fiscal 2001. DNR would realize additional revenue from no longer having to issue refunds (\$25 each) to nonresidents who do not receive stamps. DNR advises that the bill is not expected to cause a decrease in the number of bonus antlerless deer stamps issued.

Because DNR would no longer have to process refunds, special fund expenditures would decrease minimally.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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cm/jr

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