

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 398 (Delegate Stocksdale)

Environmental Matters

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Hunting Licenses - Private Farmland - Exception for Relatives

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This bill provides an exemption from obtaining a hunter's license for hunting on farmland to the owner of the farmland's stepchildren, adopted children, relatives in direct lineal consanguinity (blood kinship), and relatives within two degrees of collateral consanguinity, including the stepchildren and adopted children of those relatives. The bill also clarifies the existing exemptions for the spouses of a farm owner's children or, if living on the farmland, the spouses of a tenant's children.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2000.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Potential decrease in special fund revenues beginning in FY 2001 and federal fund revenues beginning in FY 2003. No effect on expenditures.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** An owner of farmland and the owner's spouse, children, and children's spouse are not required to obtain a hunter's license to hunt on the farmland. A tenant and the tenant's spouse, children, and if residing on the farmland, children's spouse, are also exempt from obtaining a hunter's license to hunt on farmland. Any resident serving in the armed forces of the United States under specified conditions, and any unarmed person participating in an organized foxhunt are also exempt from obtaining a license to hunt.

License fees are as follows: (1) for a resident under the age of 16 years: a basic hunting

license, \$6.50/consolidated hunting license, \$15.50; (2) for a resident, between 16 years and 65 years: basic hunting license, \$15.50/consolidated hunting license, \$24.50; (3) for a senior consolidated lifetime license for residents at least 65 years old, \$12.50; (4) for a nonresident basic license, \$120.50; (5) for a nonresident basic hunting license for residents of Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, \$83.00 or the fee charged by that state for a similar basic hunting license, whichever is greater; and (6) for a nonresident three-day hunting license, \$35.00. All fees are paid into the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund.

**Background:** Direct lineal consanguinity refers to a direct bloodline, such as the owner, his children, and his grandchildren. Two degrees of collateral consanguinity includes the owner's siblings and their children.

In 1999, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued approximately 134,900 hunting licenses and collected approximately \$3 million in associated fees. DNR advises that it does not know how many people are exempted from the license requirement under current law. DNR receives federal funds under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act that is based in part on the number of licensed hunters in the State.

**State Revenues:** DNR issues approximately 134,900 hunting licenses annually and receives approximately \$3 million annually in license fees. The number of people currently exempt from obtaining a license to hunt on farmland is unknown. DNR advises that this bill will result in an indeterminate but potentially meaningful number of additional exemptions. Because the number of additional exemptions is unknown, a precise estimate of the decrease in special fund revenues cannot be made at this time. In any event, hunting license fees range from \$6.50 to \$120.50.

Legislative Services advises, however, that many of the people that would be eligible for an exemption under this bill would choose to buy a license anyway in order to hunt on other lands in the State. Further, the expanded exemption in some instances will apply to people who otherwise would not have hunted because of the license requirement.

Federal fund revenues will also decrease if the number of licensed hunters in the State decreases. DNR provides a certification to the federal government each fiscal year on the number of licensed hunters from the previous fiscal year. Based on that data and the land area of the State, a federal apportionment of funds is calculated for the next federal fiscal year. Accordingly, if the number of licensed hunters decreases in State fiscal 2001, federal fund revenues will not be affected until federal fiscal 2003 which coincides with State fiscal 2003. Federal law, however, provides a minimum apportionment to all States of at least 3% of the total federal funds available.

On the other hand, expanding the exemption could potentially introduce additional people to hunting in the State, which could mitigate any loss resulting from expanding the exemption. To the extent that the bill results in more licensed hunters in the future, special fund revenues and federal funds will increase accordingly.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

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