

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2002 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 15

(Senator Baker)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

**Natural Resources - Consolidated Senior Veterans' Sport Fishing License -
Establishment**

This bill establishes a consolidated senior veterans' sport fishing license. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may issue the license to a resident or nonresident veteran beginning in the calendar year in which the veteran turns 70 years of age. A license holder may: (1) engage in angling on nontidal waters of the State without holding an angler's license; (2) engage in angling for trout on nontidal waters of the State without holding a trout stamp; and (3) fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries without holding a Chesapeake Bay sport fishing license. There is no fee for the license. The license is valid for a period not exceeding one year and expires on December 31 of the year of issuance.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2002.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Although a reliable estimate of the bill's impact cannot be made at this time, *under one set of assumptions*, special fund revenues could decrease by approximately \$59,250 annually beginning in FY 2003. Because the bill takes effect June 1, 2002, special fund revenues could decrease by approximately \$7,700 in FY 2002.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: There is a resident consolidated senior sport fishing license issued to residents beginning in the calendar year in which they attain the age of 65. A resident consolidated senior sport-fishing license is valid for not more than one year and expires on December 31. A holder of a resident consolidated senior sport fishing license may engage in angling on nontidal waters without holding an angler's license, engage in angling for trout on nontidal waters without holding a trout stamp, and fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries without holding a Chesapeake Bay sport fishing license. The annual fee for the license is \$5. The license may be obtained from DNR or any authorized agent. As compensation, an agent retains 50 cents for each license issued. Fees obtained from the license are paid into the Fisheries Management and Protection Fund.

There is no consolidated senior sport fishing license for nonresidents. Any nonresident 16 years old or older must secure an angler's license to fish in nontidal waters of the State. An angler's license entitles the holder to fish in nontidal waters only during the open season. The annual license fee for a nonresident is the greater of \$20 or a fee equal to the fee charged a Maryland resident by the nonresident's home state for a similar license. The annual license fee for a nonresident short-term license valid for five consecutive days is the greater of \$7 or a fee equal to the fee charged a Maryland resident by the nonresident's home state for a similar license. Fees obtained from these licenses are paid into the Fisheries Management and Protection Fund. Any nonresident 16 years or older must secure a Chesapeake Bay Sport Fishing license to fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries. The license fee is \$14; the fee for a short-term license valid for five consecutive days is \$6. Fees obtained from these licenses are paid into the Fisheries Research and Development Fund.

Any nonresident 16 years or older may not fish in any special catch-and-return trout management area and may not possess trout while fishing in nontidal waters unless the person first obtains a trout stamp in addition to an angler's license. The stamp can be obtained from any authorized agent of DNR for \$5.

Background: Based on data from 2000-2001, the average annual number of resident senior consolidated sport fishing licenses issued is 17,792; the average annual number of nonresident nontidal fishing licenses issued is 15,974; the average annual number of nonresident five-day nontidal fishing licenses issued is 11,304; the average annual number of nonresident Chesapeake Bay Sport Fishing licenses issued is 34,453; and the average annual number of nonresident five-day Chesapeake Bay Sport Fishing licenses issued is 14,892.

The number of veterans over the age of 70 years who purchase fishing licenses in Maryland is unknown.

State Revenues: Special fund revenues would decrease as a result of the establishment of the consolidated veterans' senior sport fishing license. The actual amount of the decrease cannot be reliably estimated at this time because the number of individuals who currently purchase a fishing license from DNR that would become eligible to obtain the free license as a result of this bill is unknown.

However, *under one set of assumptions*, Legislative Services advises that special fund revenues could decrease by approximately \$59,250 annually beginning in fiscal 2003. This estimate is based on the average number of resident consolidated senior sport fishing licenses issued in 2000-2001 (17,792) and the average number of nontidal and Chesapeake Bay sport fishing licenses issued to nonresidents in 2000-2001 (76,623). The estimate assumes that:

- half of the residents over the age of 65 who currently purchase a resident consolidated senior sport fishing license are veterans over the age of 70 years;
- the percentage of nonresident veterans over the age of 70 years who purchase a fishing license is the same as that of residents, or an estimated 2.1% of nonresidents who purchase a license;
- the total number of fishing licenses issued annually will not change; and
- agents will continue to sell approximately 97.5% of the licenses.

This estimate does not include any loss of revenue associated with a decrease in the sale of trout stamps to nonresidents. Any such decrease cannot be estimated at this time but is not anticipated to be significant; the fee for each trout stamp is only \$5.

In addition, DNR advises that approximately 13% of fishing licenses are sold in the month of June. Accordingly, because the bill takes effect June 1, 2002, special fund revenues could decrease by approximately \$7,700 in fiscal 2002.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 11, 2002
ncs/jr

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