

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 763 (Senator Kittleman)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Environmental Matters

Hunting Licenses - Exemption for Disabled Armed Forces Members

This bill allows individuals who are serving in the U.S. armed forces, have a service-connected disability, and possess valid military identification while hunting, to hunt on *public* property without a hunter's license, bow and arrow stamp, black powder stamp, or bonus antlered deer stamp. Under current law, the exemption only applies while hunting on *private* property.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Department of Natural Resources (DNR) special fund revenues may decrease in FY 2012 and 2013 and special/federal fund revenues may decrease in FY 2014 and future years. While the magnitude of the decrease is unknown, it is not anticipated to be significant. Expenditures are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal, as discussed below.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 354 of 2010 authorizes specified individuals to hunt on private property without a hunter's license, bow and arrow stamp, black powder stamp, or bonus antlered deer stamp. The exemption applies to individuals who are serving in the U.S. armed forces, have a service-connected disability, and possess valid military identification while hunting.

Hunting licenses cost \$24.50 for residents and \$130.00 for nonresidents; bow and arrow stamps cost \$6; black powder stamps cost \$16 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents; and bonus antlered deer stamps cost \$10 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents.

Background: DNR issues approximately 100 complimentary hunting licenses annually to Maryland residents who are former prisoners of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veterans.

DNR advises that a process for ensuring an individual who is actively serving in the military with a service-connected disability is not clear. Currently, DNR can confirm an individual is a military veteran with a service-connected disability, because the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs issues letters certifying individuals with this status. Without proof of disability, DNR advises the bill's license exemption cannot be enforced.

State Revenues: The bill may result in a decrease in special fund revenues in fiscal 2012 and 2013 and in special/federal fund revenues in fiscal 2014 and future years; however, the magnitude of the decrease is unknown.

Information about the number of individuals who are serving in the U.S. armed forces with a service-connected disability and who would take advantage of the bill's exemption is not available. DNR advises that 36,052 members of the U.S. armed forces are listed as having been wounded in combat over the past 10 years; however, a service-connected disability is not limited to combat and can occur while an individual is performing other military functions.

DNR estimates that less than 100 individuals will take advantage of the exemption annually, resulting in an annual special fund revenue decrease of approximately \$5,000, based on specified assumptions regarding the types of licenses and stamps that otherwise would have been purchased.

To the extent the bill reduces the number of hunting licenses that would have otherwise been sold, DNR loses federal Pittman Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act funding starting in fiscal 2014. DNR receives \$18 in federal funds for every hunting license purchased in the State.

Small Business Effect: DNR works with agents, which in most cases are small businesses, to issue hunting and fishing licenses. Generally, agents retain (1) \$0.75 for each resident senior hunting license and individual hunting stamp sold and issued; and (2) \$1.50 for each resident junior, nonresident junior, resident regular, nonresident regular, and nonresident three-day hunting license sold and issued. Therefore, to the extent the bill allows individuals to hunt on public land without securing a license from

agents, agents lose annual fee revenue. Any such loss is not anticipated to be significant.

To the extent the bill prompts individuals to hunt in Maryland, small business revenues increase. Based on the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, nonresident hunters spent an average of \$24 per day or \$1,101 annually in Maryland.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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