

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 242

(Senator Bailey)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

Natural Resources - Wild Waterfowl Policy - Repeal

This bill repeals an obsolete subtitle of the Natural Resources Article related to the issuance of licenses to feed waterfowl.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The provisions repealed by the bill are obsolete.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Current law authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to issue a license to a person or a group to feed waterfowl on land owned or operated by the person or group, or in waters within 300 yards of a shoreline that is owned or operated by the person or group, in accordance with statutory policies and guidelines and any regulations and procedures developed by the Secretary of Natural Resources. However, there are no implementing regulations in COMAR. Current law establishes an application process, requires applicants to pay a \$10 fee, and establishes restrictions that a person operating under a license to feed waterfowl must follow.

The stated statutory purpose of this license is to aid the relief of crop depredation, to provide further protection of wild waterfowl by encouraging the placement of feed to supplement the dwindling supply of natural feed available to wild waterfowl in the State, and to regulate feeding so that it is not a means of encouraging wild waterfowl to, on, or

over, an area where hunters are attempting to take the waterfowl. The bill repeals the entire subtitle related to these licenses.

Background: DNR advises that it has not issued a license to feed waterfowl in more than 20 years. Information on DNR's [website](#) indicates that feeding wildlife can cause problems, including the spread of disease. Further, wild animals need varied, natural foods as a part of their normal diet. DNR notes that wild animal's digestive systems are adapted to extract energy from a variety of foods available throughout the seasons. In the case of waterfowl such as ducks and geese, high-calorie supplemental diets can negatively impact wing development, causing a deformation known as 'angel wing.'

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 24, 2020
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