

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 236

(Delegate Carey)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Hunting and Fishing Licenses - Active Military, Former Prisoners of War,
Recipients of the Purple Heart Award, and Disabled Veterans**

This bill makes permanent provisions established by Chapters 461, 462, and 463 of 2017 that provide discounted and complimentary hunting and fishing privileges for certain individuals. The bill also repeals related reporting requirements. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Special fund revenues continue to decrease minimally on an annual basis beyond FY 2020 due to the repeal of the termination dates. Expenditures are not affected; the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can continue to implement these provisions with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: Chapters 461, 462, and 463 of 2017, taken together, established discounted and complimentary hunting and fishing privileges for certain individuals. Chapter 463 was the most comprehensive and incorporated the provisions of Chapters 461 and 462.

Chapter 463 of 2017

Chapter 463 of 2017 authorized DNR to issue a lifetime complimentary angler's or sport fishing license to an out-of-state former prisoner of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veteran if the person's state of residence extends similar, reciprocal privileges. Persons issued a lifetime complimentary angler's license under that authorization are also exempt from a requirement to purchase a trout stamp in order to fish or possess trout in certain areas. Chapter 463 also established that specified veterans issued a lifetime complimentary hunting license were subject to competency in firearms and hunter safety requirements. Chapter 463 required DNR to implement programs to provide discounted angler's, sport fishing, and hunting licenses, and associated stamps and permits to Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award. Under current law, these provisions are set to terminate June 30, 2020. The bill repeals the termination date.

Chapter 463 required DNR to report the Governor and the General Assembly, by December 31, 2019, on (1) the number of discounted licenses, stamps, and permits issued to recipients of the Purple Heart award under the Act; (2) the availability, in other states, of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to Maryland residents who are former prisoners of war and 100% service-connected disabled American veterans; (3) the number of such licenses issued to Maryland residents; and (4) the number of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses issued by DNR to out-of-state former prisoners of war and 100% service-connected disabled American veterans. The bill repeals this requirement.

Additional Discounted and Commemorative License Provisions under Current Law

The Recreational License Donation Program enables a person to purchase and donate a hunting license, among other licenses, and any corresponding stamps. DNR may then issue the donated license or stamp, at no cost, to a Gold Star recipient, a disabled veteran, a disabled member of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a permanently disabled person who requires the use of a wheelchair. A recipient of a donated license or stamp must be sponsored by a qualifying nonprofit charitable organization that provides recreational hunting or fishing opportunities for Gold Star recipients, disabled veterans, disabled members of the U.S. Armed Forces, or permanently disabled persons who require the use of a wheelchair. In addition, a recipient of a donated hunting license is subject to specified statutory hunting safety requirements. This program is unchanged by the bill.

Complimentary Hunting Licenses

A complimentary hunting license provides the license holder with the same privileges as a standard hunting license. DNR may issue a complimentary hunting license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, or an official or an enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of another state that

reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses. This authorization is unchanged by the bill.

DNR may also issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to (1) a Maryland resident who is certified as a former prisoner of war or as a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran; and (2) an out-of-state person who is certified as a former prisoner of war or as a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran if the person's state of residence extends similar privileges to former prisoners of war or disabled veterans of this State. Chapter 463 established that a recipient of a lifetime complimentary hunting license is subject to statutory competency in firearms and hunter safety requirements. As mentioned above, the bill makes the firearms and hunter safety requirements for lifetime complimentary hunting license recipients permanent.

Fees

Varying fees apply for DNR hunting and fishing licenses. The annual fees for resident hunting, angler's, and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses are \$24.50, \$20.50, and \$15.00, respectively. Lower fees apply to certain junior, senior, and short-term licenses. The fee for a trout stamp is \$5 for residents. The fees for residents for the most widely purchased hunting stamps and permits are generally between \$5 and \$10. The bill does not change any of these fees.

Background: On July 1, 2017, DNR announced that, pursuant to Chapter 463, any Maryland veteran who has received a Purple Heart qualifies for a 50% discount on Maryland hunting and fishing licenses. Applicants must apply for the discount program at one of DNR's regional licensing and registration service centers. Although DNR was unable to provide specific data available on the number of licenses, permits, and stamps sold at a discount to veterans awarded the Purple Heart award in the State, DNR advises that it has a record of 48 customers with Purple Heart certification in the department's licensing system.

DNR has not yet issued the reports that were required by Chapters 461, 462, or 463.

State Revenues: Special fund revenues for DNR continue to decrease minimally on an annual basis beyond fiscal 2020 as a result of repealing the termination date for the requirement for DNR to issue discounted hunting and fishing licenses, stamps, and permits to Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award. Although an exact amount of any such decrease in special fund revenues cannot be reliably estimated at this time, the Department of Legislative Services assumes that the amount is minimal.

The hunting, angler's, and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license fees are deposited in the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund, Fisheries Management and Protection Fund, and Fisheries Research and Development Fund, respectively.

The continued authorization for DNR to issue a lifetime complimentary angler's or sport fishing license to an out-of-state former prisoner of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veteran is not expected to materially affect license fee revenues.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: SB 25 (Senator Simonaire, *et al.*) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 20, 2020
an/lgc Third Reader - March 11, 2020
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 11, 2020

Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510