

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB91.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 401
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3673 • 301-858-3673
800-492-7122 Ext. 3673
Jack.Bailey@senate.state.md.us

District Office
Dorsey Professional Park
23680 Three Notch Road, Unit 101
Hollywood, Maryland 20636
240-309-4238

January 25, 2023

Senate Bill 91 – Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License – Alterations

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 91 – Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License – Alterations. This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to issue an apprentice hunting license to a person younger than age 17 who has previously been issued an apprentice hunting license.

The apprentice hunting license is a key part of our State's efforts to ensure that Maryland's youth have the ability to learn about hunting, which is a significant part of our culture, particularly in our more rural areas. This license gives a person the ability to hunt if they are accompanied and directly supervised by a person who is at least age 18 and has a valid resident hunting license and the person accompanying the apprentice hunter maintains close visual and verbal contact with, provides adequate direction to, and is in a position to immediately assume control of the apprentice hunter's firearm.

Under current law, this license cannot be renewed or re-applied for; this bill would change this for individuals under 17 only. Senate Bill 91 is narrowly targeted to provide Maryland youth with the ability to renew or reapply for this license, giving them more opportunities to learn from experienced hunters, safely passing this great tradition on to the next generation.

It is important to note that, as part of this legislation, an applicant for a second or subsequent apprentice hunting license is required to repeat the required DNR-approved online course of instruction in competency in firearms and hunter safety. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 91. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey

SB0091_DNR_SUP_EEE_1-25-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Paul Peditto

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary

January 25, 2023

BILL NUMBER: SB 91 - First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Apprentice Hunting License – Alterations

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports SB 91 because it expands hunting opportunities for junior hunters in Maryland. Hunting remains a critical tool for wildlife management, particularly for abundant species like white-tailed deer. Hunter numbers have significantly declined across the country over the past 50 years. Most states, including Maryland, have invested in various recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) programs to stabilize hunter numbers and hopefully reverse the declining trend. Recruiting and retaining junior hunters is an important component in these programs, and SB 91 would assist with these efforts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Apprentice hunting licenses are common throughout the United States. Maryland instituted its apprentice license in 2017. Since that time, thousands of new junior and adult hunters have taken advantage of the program. However, one complaint often heard is that juniors can only acquire an apprentice license for one hunting year. When that license expires, they must take a full hunter safety course and acquire a regular Maryland junior hunting license. Unfortunately, some juniors are not ready for a full hunting license or, due to timing of hunter education courses offered (which can be limited due to availability of volunteer instructors), are not able to complete the necessary requirements in time to obtain a full license during the next season. In these instances, the junior is forced to not hunt for an entire season, and there is a greater risk that the junior will lose interest in pursuing hunting in the future.

BILL EXPLANATION

SB 91 would enable junior hunters to obtain an apprentice hunting license in subsequent years (through age 16) so that they could continue hunting. Apprentice license holders are required to be directly supervised by a licensed hunter and must complete an online hunter safety course before obtaining the license. The bill requires that this safety course is taken each year that the junior hunter wants to acquire an apprentice license. The hunter would then need to obtain the traditional hunter education certification before purchasing a regular hunting license.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)