

SB0010_DNR_SUP_E&T_3-29-23 bill report.pdf

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Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 29, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 10 – Third Reader

SHORT TITLE: Department of Natural Resources – Documents – Digital or Electronic Issuance

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

DNR currently electronically issues and accepts its recreational fishing and hunting licenses, and commercial fishing licenses. However, there are certain issuances that must be physically affixed and displayed so as to be visible from a certain distance that cannot otherwise be issued electronically. Though these items may be purchased electronically, they are unable to be issued electronically.

The Department-issued vessel certificate of number registration decal and cards are unable to be issued electronically until a change is made to federal law and regulation. Once these changes can be made and approved, the United States Coast Guard will have the statutory authority to allow it on the State level.

Currently, several Units within DNR issue permits, registrations, and certificates outside of the COMPASS licensing system. DNR is working to meet the requirements of this bill in relation to these items in DNR’s development of a modernized licensing system.

The Department supports the bill as amended as it exempts specific DNR-issued licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, and/or certificates from the requirement that they be issued electronically that are otherwise required to be physically affixed and displayed; as well as offers uncodified language expressing intent to have the Department electronically issue any federally restricted licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, and certificates once those federal restrictions are lifted.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last five years, the Department of Natural Resources has made major improvements in the electronic issuance and allowance of licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, and certificates. The Department has also made changes to allow most applications for such products to be submitted electronically.

At this time, the Department issues over 90 licenses, stamps, permits, registrations and certificates.

The Department has been working on a major information technology modernization project that would modify the existing online licensing system to be able to incorporate additional licenses, permits, registrations, and certificates in a manner that meets the bill’s requirements, and is hopeful to be able to implement that system update in the near future.

BILL EXPLANATION

This bill would require the Department of Natural Resources to make available certain licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, and certificates in a digital or electronic format.

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SenatorBailey_FAV_SB10_House.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

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

Budget & Taxation Committee



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March 29, 2023

Senate Bill 10 – Department of Natural Resources – Documents – Digital or Electronic Issuance

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 10 – Department of Natural Resources – Documents – Digital or Electronic Issuance. This bill would require the Department of Natural Resources to make available and issue most licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, or certificates authorized by the Natural Resources Article in a digital or electronic format.

As I am sure you are aware, important documents are increasingly available in both electronic and physical formats, empowering our citizens to choose the method that they prefer. Our State's laws and policies should reflect this fact. This legislation would ensure that Marylanders who choose to fish, hunt, or engage in other activities requiring a license, permit, or other document from DNR are able to carry and display that document in the manner of their choosing.

Some Marylanders who are very active in hunting and fishing need to hold numerous licenses, permits, and stamps to engage in all of the activities for which they are authorized. This bill would permit these individuals to have these documents on their phone rather than carrying around all of these physical licenses. While legislation passed two years ago gave this option to the holders of some DNR licenses and stamps, the law as currently structured leaves it to the General Assembly to pass legislation authorizing any specific additional licenses to be issued electronically. I believe that it is time for DNR to provide this option for as many licenses, stamps, permits, registrations, and certificates as possible.

The bill includes provisions added at the request of DNR to ensure that it does not cover licenses which must be affixed to a boat or that cannot be issued electronically under Federal law. The bill is effective July 1, 2024 to allow the Department time to implement these changes in conjunction with their current information technology modernization project. With these provisions, the bill does not have any fiscal impact and can be implemented with existing resources.

It is important to note that this legislation would not eliminate paper licenses. This bill would give Marylanders the choice of how they want to carry these documents. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 10. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Senator Jack Bailey