

# SenatorBailey\_FAV\_SB152.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 23, 2024

**Senate Bill 152 – Fishing Licenses and Stamps – Fee Exemptions – Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 152, which would exempt residents who qualify for certain assistance programs from the requirement to pay for fishing licenses and stamps.

Senate Bill 152 would exempt residents eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or Medicaid from fishing license and stamp fees. This legislation is modeled on similar exemptions that exist in several states, particularly North Carolina. It is also similar to exemptions in current law for blind persons.

I have been and continue to be a strong advocate for appropriately funding our State's natural resources. However, I also believe very strongly in the power of self-reliance and that, as the old saying goes, if you give a person a fish, you feed them for a day, but if you teach a person to fish, you feed them for a lifetime. If a person is truly needy enough to be eligible for this assistance, it is highly likely that person is fishing out of a need to feed themselves or their families. I don't believe the State should be pursuing these individuals for being unable to pay for their fishing licenses, and this fee exemption will ensure that will not be the case.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 152. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Senator Jack Bailey

# **HPRP Favorable SB 152.pdf**

Uploaded by: Michelle Madaio

Position: FAV



## **HOMELESS PERSONS REPRESENTATION PROJECT, INC.**

201 North Charles Street, Suite 1104 Baltimore, MD 21201 (Headquarters)

P.O. Box 1787, Rockville, Maryland 20849 (Satellite Office)

(410) 685-6589 [www.hprplaw.org](http://www.hprplaw.org)

### **Support**

#### **SB 152 - Fishing Licenses and Stamps – Fee Exemptions – Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

**Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, January 23, 2024**

#### **Testimony of Michelle S. Madaio, Director – Economic Justice Homeless Persons Representation Project**

*The Homeless Persons Representation Project, Inc. (HPRP) is a non-profit civil legal services organization that provides free legal representation to people who are experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness on legal issues that will lead to an end to homelessness. HPRP regularly represents individuals and families in accessing public benefits through administrative appeals.*

SB 152 eliminates annual fishing licensing fees for residents who receive means-tested public benefits in Maryland, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or Medicaid. These are critical anti-poverty programs that provide Marylanders who have no income or very low income with food and cash assistance and health coverage. Residents can only qualify for these programs if their income is below a limited amount. For example, the maximum gross income limit for a single adult in Maryland is currently \$1,580 per month for SNAP<sup>1</sup> and \$1,677 per month for Medicaid.<sup>2</sup> The income limits to qualify for TANF are far lower<sup>3</sup>; even when a family receives TANF, the benefit is so low the family is still living in poverty.<sup>4</sup> The goals of these programs are to assist Maryland's most vulnerable and lowest income households with critical food, health care, and cash assistance. Exempting households that receive means-tested benefits from annual fishing licensing fees would allow households that fish to keep \$5 to \$40 of their annual income to spend on food for their families.

**HPRP urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 152.** If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Madaio (she/her), Director – Economic Justice at (410) 716-0521 or [mmadaio@hprplaw.org](mailto:mmadaio@hprplaw.org).

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Human Services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Mass Changes for October 2023, FIA Information Memo #24-16-revised (effective October 1, 2023), *available at* [https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2024/24-16-REVISED-AT-SNAP-MASS-CHANGES-FOR-OCTOBER-2023\\_.pdf](https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2024/24-16-REVISED-AT-SNAP-MASS-CHANGES-FOR-OCTOBER-2023_.pdf) (last accessed 1/19/24).

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Health Connection, “How to Enroll in Medicaid,” *available at* <https://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov/how-to-enroll/medicaid/> (last accessed 1/19/24).

<sup>3</sup> The maximum TANF benefit for a two-person household in MD is \$575 per month. *See* Maryland Department of Human Services, FIA Information Memo #22-31 (effective 9/1/22), *available at* <https://dhs.maryland.gov/documents/FIA/Action%20Transmittals-AT%20-%20Information%20Memo-IM/AT2022/22-31%20IM%20-%20TCA,%20TDAP%20BENEFITS%20INCREASE%20UPDATE.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Gina Azito Thompson, Diana Azevedo-McCaffrey, and Da’Shon Carr, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Policy Brief: Increases in TANF Cash Benefit Levels are Critical to Help Families Meet Rising Costs,” (February 3, 2023), *available at* <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/policy-brief-more-states-raising-tanf-benefits-to-boost-families>

**SB0152\_DNR\_SWA\_EEE\_1-23-24.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FWA



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

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January 23, 2024

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 152 – First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Fishing Licenses and Stamps - Fee Exemptions - Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

The agency supports the intent of this bill as subsistence fishing is important and understands the financial hardships of citizens participating in these programs. We also appreciate the Sponsor for working with the Department to figure out potential amendments necessary to clarify the intent and lessen the fiscal and operational impact to the Department.

The Department has reached out to North Carolina to discuss how they manage a similar exemption, and based on information received there is about a 10-15% fiscal impact to recreation license revenue.

As referenced above, we are currently working with the sponsor to determine amendments to lessen this impact, and these potential amendments include changing “eligible” to “enrolled” for those who can receive this exemption – and also potentially removing medicaid recipients from those eligible to lessen the fiscal impact on the Agency.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No similar bills have been proposed previously. The agency does issue complimentary licenses to former prisoners of war, 100% service connected disabled American veterans, certain government individuals such as the President of the United States and state governors. Additionally, the state has 25 free fishing areas located throughout the state where fishing licenses are not required. Individuals may fish for free from a boat with a boat license. Individuals may fish for free from their property abutting water. And individuals may fish for free the first two Saturdays in June and July 4th.

**BILL EXPLANATION**

The bill would make recreational fishing licenses free to residents who are recipients of Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, or TANF programs.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

# **2024 MD SB 152 - SNAP Fishing Licenses - LOS with**

Uploaded by: Kaleigh Leager

Position: FWA



**To: Hon. Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
2 West  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401**

**Re: Senate Bill 152 – Fishing Licenses and Stamps – Fee Exemptions –  
Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

**Position: Encourage Amendments**

**Date: 1/23/2024**

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Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Honorable Members of the Maryland State Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

As the Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge you to amend Senate Bill 152 Fishing Licenses and Stamps – Fee Exemptions – Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs, to include a provision that provides the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a reimbursement model for discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses within the State of Maryland. Such a reimbursement model would not only solve the loss of conservation funding for this bill, but all discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses in the future. While CSF appreciates the intent of this bill, we cannot support this bill in its current form.

Sportsmen and women provide, on average, nearly 60% of the funds used by state fish and wildlife agencies to carry out their critical conservation missions through the “user pays – public benefits” of the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). For example, revenue from the sale of fishing licenses in Maryland goes directly to the DNR for the use of fish and habitat management in addition to providing quality and safe access points for residents and non-residents alike to enjoy Maryland’s waterways. Additionally, the Pittman-Robertson (PR) and Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Acts are two ASCF cornerstones that authorize federal funding for state fish and wildlife agencies to manage and restore wildlife resources. The distribution of these funds is formula-based and dependent on state size and the number of paid hunting and fishing license holders per state. This means that states that distribute free, and in some cases discounted licenses, are losing funds both from the initial revenue of license sales, as well as from funds that would be appropriated under



PR and DJ. To compensate for this, some states have enacted legislation that reallocates funds from the state general fund to compensate the state fish and wildlife agency for the lost revenue. Tennessee provides a great example of an amendment that could be added to this bill to protect conservation funding to the MD DNR: Tennessee [Title 70, Chapter 2, § 70-2-104](#): “The agency shall be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses created by statute on or after January 1, 2017, in an amount equal to the discounts received.”

The increased costs of goods and services in today’s economy are also impacting states’ abilities to manage their fish and wildlife populations and habitats. During the 2023 Legislative Session, the legislature passed a comprehensive bill that CSF supported, increasing the costs of hunting licenses and stamps to provide the DNR with increased revenue to help curb the increasing costs for managing wildlife and their habitats. The last time Maryland’s bay or tidal fishing license fees were increased was 14 years ago (2010). With the Administration’s concern for the health and wellbeing of the Chesapeake Bay (which includes fish populations and habitats) we believe that continuing to provide free and discounted licenses without a reimbursement model is detrimental not only to our natural resources and their management, but also to our current and future sportsmen and women of the Old-Line State.

In closing, the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation understands and appreciates the intent of this bill and realizes the importance of outdoor recreation and the ability to provide healthy and affordable meal options for families, especially to individuals and families that are less financially secure. However, offering free and discounted licenses limits the ability of the DNR to fund their conservation work, which benefits all residents. To protect the integrity of sportsmen-generated dollars through the ASCF, we encourage you to work towards providing statutory protections against lost conservation dollars by amending this legislation to require the agency be reimbursed from the general fund for any free license the legislature decides to implement. For these reasons, we ask you to amend SB 152, and without such amendments we cannot offer our support at this time.

Sincerely,



Kaleigh E. Leager  
Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States | Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation  
110 North Carolina Ave, SE | Washington, DC 20003  
[kleager@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:kleager@congressionalsportsmen.org) | 202-543-6850 X 20

Enclosed: Relevant issue brief on the following related topic that the bill before you addresses.

[Reimbursement to Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses](#)

# Reimbursement to Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses

## Introduction

Through the “user pays – public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF), sportsmen and women provide, on average, nearly 60% of the funds used by state fish and wildlife agencies to carry out their critical conservation missions.<sup>1</sup> Revenue from sporting licenses is a major source of these funds, which is funneled back into conservation through the state agencies. Most states across the country have developed policies and programs that serve to provide either discounted or free hunting/fishing licenses to seniors, active-duty military, veterans, and disabled persons. In recent years legislatures have considered bills to significantly expand the free licenses they offer to also include first responders, hunter education instructors, and more. While these programs are viewed by some as a great way to reward specific groups of individuals for their services, they also decrease the funds available to wildlife agencies and therefore limit the agencies’ abilities to deliver their conservation services which benefit all fish and wildlife, their habitats, and all people of the states.

## Background

The Pittman-Robertson (PR) and Dingell-Johnson (DJ) Acts are two ASCF cornerstones that authorize federal funding for state fish and wildlife agencies to manage and restore wildlife resources. The distribution of these funds is formula-based and dependent on state size and the number of paid hunting and fishing license holders per state. This means that states that distribute free, and in some cases discounted licenses, are losing funds both from the initial revenue of license sales, as well as from funds that would be appropriated under PR and DJ. To compensate for this, some states have enacted legislation that reallocates funds from the state general fund to compensate the state fish and wildlife agency for the lost revenue.

## Points of Interest

- Almost all state fish and wildlife agencies are primarily funded through ASCF.<sup>2</sup>
- Qualifications for discounted licenses varies from state to state but nearly all (46) offer reduced fees for seniors.
- Three states (Michigan, New Jersey, and Tennessee) have enacted legislation that reimburses the fish and wildlife agencies for revenue lost from license exemptions/discounts from the state general fund.
- In 2022, Massachusetts considered stand-alone legislation, as well as a provision within the draft Fiscal Year 2023 Budget, that would reimburse lost license revenue from the general fund.<sup>3</sup>
- States must receive a net revenue of \$2.00 from each license sale to report a certified license holder which qualifies for additional federal funds. On average, each certified hunting license brings the state an additional \$26 and each fishing license brings in \$10 of federal

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<sup>1</sup> “The State Conservation Machine,” *Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*, accessed August 26, 2022, [https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/3615/1853/8699/The\\_State\\_Conservation\\_Machine-FINAL.pdf](https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/3615/1853/8699/The_State_Conservation_Machine-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> “American System of Conservation Funding”. *Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation*, last modified 2017, accessed February 1, 2022 <https://congressionalsportsmen.org/policies/state/ascf>

<sup>3</sup> “Bill S.546” *The 192<sup>nd</sup> General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, accessed February 1, 2022. <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S546>

aid. When license fees are eliminated completely, states lose out on this additional revenue in addition to the loss of the original cost of the license.<sup>4</sup>

## Language

The following states have enacted or introduced legislation that would reimburse the costs of lost license sales.

- **Massachusetts [Bill S.546](#):** “The inland fisheries and game fund shall be reimbursed annually from the general fund for all loss of revenue for any fishing or hunting license provided at a discount and for any license provided free of charge.”<sup>3</sup>
- **Michigan [MCL 324.43546](#):** “The department shall determine the total fees that would have been collected if those senior citizens had been required to purchase full-price resident hunting and fishing licenses during the preceding license year. From this total, the department shall subtract the fees collected from the sale of senior hunting and fishing licenses during the preceding license year. The difference is the amount that would otherwise be collected.... The legislature shall annually appropriate from the general fund a sum equal to the fees that would otherwise be collected.”<sup>5</sup>
- **New Jersey [Title 23, Chapter 3-1f](#):** “At the end of each fiscal year, the Director of the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife shall certify to the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the Department of the Treasury the amount that the "hunters' and anglers' license fund" has been reduced as a result of any license issued without charge pursuant to section 1 of this act. An amount equal to the amount certified shall be appropriated each year from the General Fund to the "hunters' and anglers' license fund" for additional operating costs.”<sup>6</sup>
- **Tennessee [Title 70, Chapter 2, § 70-2-104](#):** “The agency shall be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses created by statute on or after January 1, 2017, in an amount equal to the discounts received.”<sup>7</sup>

## Moving Forward

Revenue from hunting and fishing license sales is one of the major funding sources for the agencies that work to ensure the health of our fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. When giving out free and discounted licenses states limit the ability of the fish and wildlife agencies to fund their conservation work, which benefits all citizens. To protect the integrity of sportsmen-generated dollars through the American System of Conservation Funding, legislators are encouraged to work towards providing statutory protections against lost conservation dollars by passing legislation to require the agency be reimbursed from the general fund for any free license the legislature decides to implement.

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<sup>4</sup> “Department of Planning and Budget 2022 Fiscal Impact Statement” *Virginia House of Delegates Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources*, accessed August 25, 2022, <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?221+oth+HB120F122+PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> MCL 324.43546, *Michigan Legislature*, accessed August 19, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> “2020 New Jersey Revised Statutes” *Justia*, accessed February 1, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> “Tennessee Code Unannotated” *Lexis Law*, accessed February 1, 2022.

**SB 0152.pdf**

Uploaded by: Susan Blaney

Position: INFO

Susan Blaney  
11 Sailors Way  
Ocean Pines, MD 21811

Dear Senator Bailey

I would like to offer my positive feedback on Fishing Licenses and Stamps- Fee Exemptions- Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs to anyone on the Eastern shore already receiving government assistance, such as SNAP, TCA, ect. This has the potential to benefit us economically, educationally, and environmentally.

Please help our community thrive. Every little bit counts. How rewarding it will be to put the labor of your day on the dinner table.

RE: SB0152

Sincere Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Blaney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "S".

Susan Blaney