

Legislative Analysis



ESTABLISH DISABLED VETERANS FIREARM DEER SEASON (2007 PILOT PROGRAM)

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Senate Bill 633

Sponsor: Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom

House Committee: Tourism, Outdoor Recreation, and Natural Resources

Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Complete to 9-11-07

A REVISED SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 633 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 8-1-07

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to adopt a pilot firearm deer hunting season for disabled veterans who are residents of Michigan. The pilot program would operate in at least three areas in 2007, including the counties of Marquette, Mason, and Newaygo. The bill would establish the following rules for the pilot program:

- Season would take place during youth firearm deer season. The firearm deer season for disabled veterans would take place during the youth firearm deer hunting days, if any, established by order of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC).
- One-deer limit. A disabled veteran could take one deer during this season.
- License or deer management assistance permit required. A disabled veteran would need one of the following to hunt during the pilot disabled veteran firearm season: a current firearm deer license, combination deer license, or antlerless deer license; or, alternatively, a deer management assistance permit allowing the taking of a deer with a firearm on the land where the veteran was hunting. [Note, however, that, as is currently the case, disabled veterans could purchase hunting and fishing licenses at a reduced senior citizen rate (\$6 instead of \$15). Further, the bill would amend the definition of "disabled veteran" to allow more veterans to qualify for reduced license fees. See discussion below.]
- Same kind of deer as during regular firearm deer season. The same kind of deer could be taken during the disabled veteran season as during the regular November firearm deer season.
- NRC authority. The NRC would retain its authority to establish a special hunting season in any area of the state for disabled veterans or other classes of individuals.
- Definition of "disabled veteran" for purposes of hunting. The bill would broaden the definition of "disabled veteran" by defining "disabled veteran" as a resident who is in "individually unemployable status" as a result of military service and who is entitled to veteran benefits (for a disability other than blindness). Under current law, a veteran must have been determined to be permanently and totally disabled and entitled to veteran benefits at the 100% rate (for a disability other than blindness) to qualify for lower license fees.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the Game and Fish Protection Fund. There may be a revenue increase if the earlier hunting season enables more disabled veterans to participate in the firearm deer season. It should be noted that revenue may be credited to an earlier fiscal year if licenses are purchased before October 1. Depending on the effective date of this proposed legislation, it may not be possible to schedule a special hunting period during the 2007 hunting season. In such a case, the pilot program could be instituted in 2008.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.