

## ALLOW NRC TO MAKE GAME SPECIES DESIGNATION

Mary Ann Cleary, Director  
Phone: (517) 373-8080  
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

**Senate Bill 288 (Substitute S-5)**

**Sponsor: Sen. Tom Casperson**

*(Enacted as Public Act 21 of 2013)*

**House Committee: Natural Resources**

**Senate Committee: Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes**

**Complete to 5-7-13**

## A REVISED SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 288 (S-5) AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 4-25-13

The bill would amend Parts 401 (Wildlife Conservation), 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing), and 487 (Sport Fishing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to:

- Allow the Natural Resources Commission to designate a species as game,
- Provide certain licenses free of charge to members of the military, and
- Specify that the Natural Resources Commission has the exclusive authority to regulate the taking of fish.

### Game Species Designation

The bill would allow the Natural Resources Commission, in addition to the Legislature, to designate a species as game and authorize the establishment of the first open season for the animal through the use of orders. Only the Legislature would have authority to remove a species from the list of game. The Natural Resources Commission would be prevented from designating the following as game:

- Domestic animals;
- Livestock;
- Any species added to the game list by a public act that was rejected by a referendum before the effective date of this bill.

### Free Military Licenses

The bill would allow members of the military to obtain free of charge any license issued under Part 435 that is not subject to any lottery or other eligibility requirements. Currently, members of the military stationed outside of Michigan are eligible for such licenses for \$1.

The bill would also remove a provision specifying such licenses are only valid for two weeks during the season in which the license would otherwise be valid.

### Taking of Fish

The bill would provide that the Natural Resources Commission has exclusive authority to regulate the taking of fish in Michigan. The Commission is required, to the greatest

extent possible, to utilize principles of sound scientific management in making decisions regarding the taking of fish. The Commission could only issue orders regarding the taking of fish following a public meeting and an opportunity for public input. Copies of an order would have to be provided to the following within at 30 days prior to the order being issued:

- All members of every standing House or Senate standing committee that considers legislation pertaining to conservation, the environment, natural resources, recreation, tourism, or agriculture.
- The chairperson of the House and Senate Appropriations committees.
- The members of the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees that consider the budget of the Department of Natural Resources.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Senate Bill 288 would have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources. The bill's provisions would reduce the amount of revenue deposited into the Game and Fish Protection Fund and its subfunds by an unknown amount. In addition, the bill would reduce current federal funding by an indeterminate amount as well.

Under current law, members of the military who are Michigan residents and are stationed outside of Michigan may purchase any hunting license for \$1.00 that does not require a separate application. The bill would change these provisions and allow all Michigan residents who are members of the military to receive these hunting licenses free of charge - regardless of where they are stationed. In FY 2012, the DNR sold 13,959 military hunting licenses for \$1.00. Under the provisions of the bill, these licenses would be obtained free of charge, and the DNR would see a reduction of approximately \$14,000 in revenue. Revenues from hunting licenses must be deposited into the Game and Fish Protection Fund and its subfunds.

In addition, the DNR would also see a reduction in revenue to the Game and Fish Protection Fund for each hunting license that would now be given free to members of the military that are stationed inside Michigan. Under current law, these individuals would be required to purchase these licenses at full price.

In order to receive certain federal funds, the DNR must annually certify the number of unique hunters that purchase licenses in a given year. One of the factors used to calculate certain federal funding is the number of unique hunters that purchased licenses. Only licenses that generate a net revenue of \$1 may be counted for federal funding purposes (net revenue means the amount of revenue received after expenses such as vendor commissions are deducted). Licenses that are given away for free do not qualify. By allowing military personnel that are stationed in Michigan to receive hunting licenses free of charge instead of purchasing licenses at the full price, the bill would reduce the number of hunters that purchase licenses and, thus, the number of hunters that the DNR

can certify. Because of that, the amount of federal funding that the Department receives would be reduced by an unknown amount.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Stoutenburg  
Fiscal Analyst: Viola Bay Wild

---

■ 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.