

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2342

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to establishing a donation program for resident disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses.

Brief Description: Establishing a donation program for resident disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Lovick, Eslick, Ryu, Hayes, Peterson, Ortiz-Self, Kloba, Sells, Muri, Tarleton, Johnson, Sawyer, Robinson, Dolan, Chapman, Stanford and Reeves.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 1/9/18, 1/16/18 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the Department of Fish and Wildlife to accept donations from the public towards the purchase of fishing and hunting licenses for disabled veteran residents.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; McCabe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin, Reeves and Sawyer.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) regulates the state's fish and wildlife resource and issues licenses for different hunting and fishing activities permitted under state

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law. The rates for such licenses vary by activity and are tiered on a fee schedule for adults, seniors, youth, and nonresidents.

A disabled veteran may apply for reduced licensing fees. The reduction rates includes a combination fishing license for \$5, as well as all hunting licenses at the youth rate. To qualify for a reduced rate license, the veteran must be a Washington resident who is an honorably discharged veteran and:

- has a 30 percent or greater service-related disability; or
- is at least 65 years old with a service-related disability of any kind.

A nonresident veteran, otherwise meeting the same criteria, may apply for any fishing or hunting license at the rate of an adult in-state resident.

State residents with a physical or developmental disability also qualify for reduced licenses, regardless of military experience. The DFW has authority to adopt special rules to enhance the fishing and hunting opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The DFW may enter into written agreements with landowners to use property for fishing and wildlife-oriented recreation and may adopt rules regarding the conduct of persons engaging in such activities on those lands.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The DFW may accept donations from the public that can be used by in-state resident disabled veterans who are eligible for reduced fishing and hunting licenses. Donations may be used on a first-come, first-served basis, towards the purchase of a state fishing or hunting license. Donations may be used to cover the licensing fees as well as the transaction and dealer fees associated with the licensing fees. The DFW may take other actions to facilitate fishing and hunting opportunities for resident disabled veterans, including entering into agreements with willing landowners.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill makes eligibility for the donation program the same criteria for disabled veterans eligible for reduced fishing and hunting licenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This program would provide opportunities for people to give back to veterans who have risked their lives. People already want to donate to veterans and this is a way to make a meaningful contribution. Fishing and hunting activities provide an open setting for veterans to share similar experiences and make connections, which can open doors to outreach and services. Outdoor activities offer a safe environment to connect and can be the first steps to healing.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Lovick, prime sponsor; Shelly Helder and Josh Dugan, Snohomish County; and Evan Yett, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.