

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1230

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to broadening the eligibility for a reduced recreational hunting and fishing license rate for resident disabled hunters and fishers.

**Brief Description:** Broadening the eligibility for a reduced recreational hunting and fishing license rate for resident disabled hunters and fishers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Barkis, Blake, Walsh, Dolan, Doglio, Irwin, Springer, Lekanoff, Eslick, Appleton and Tarleton; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources: 1/25/19, 2/1/19 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue hunting and fishing licenses at a 50 percent discount from the resident rate to residents with a permanent disability documented by a medical provider.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Shewmake, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chapman, Dye, Fitzgibbon, Kretz, Lekanoff, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Ramos, Schmick, Springer and Walsh.

**Staff:** Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

**Background:**

With certain exceptions, a person is required to purchase a fishing or hunting license from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in order to hunt or fish in Washington. By statute,

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the WDFW charges different rates to Washington residents and nonresidents for hunting and fishing licenses.

The WDFW is required to issue combination fishing licenses at the reduced rate of \$5, and all hunting licenses at the youth hunting license rate, for certain groups, including residents with disabilities who permanently use a wheelchair, and residents who are blind or visually impaired.

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**Summary of Bill:**

Upon written application and subject to WDFW verification of eligibility, the WDFW must issue hunting and fishing licenses defined by the WDFW by rule at a 50 percent discount from the resident rate to residents with a permanent disability documented by a physician, physician's assistant, or registered nurse practitioner.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) More than 50,000 people participate in the WDFW's Americans with Disabilities Act program each year, including through specialized boat ramps and hunting blinds. About 10,000 people with disabilities qualify for reduced-rate fishing and hunting licenses. The current law restricts eligibility to reduced-rate licenses and leaves out many with disabilities. This is unfair, and may be inconsistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The approach in the bill would more than double the number of customers who qualify for reduced rate fees. Expanding eligibility means reducing the discount rate for fishing license fees, but it keeps the hunting license discount about the same. The fiscal impact would be about \$500,000 per biennium in the short term, but that impact is likely to go down over time.

Under the current version of the law, a person who uses a wheelchair does not necessarily qualify for a reduced-rate fishing and hunting license. Disabilities come in all shapes and sizes, and there are many disabilities one cannot see. It would be good to help those with disabilities to go out to fish and hunt.

The WDFW has worked with stakeholders groups on this issue, and recent efforts have included six wildlife viewing blinds that are accessible to those with disabilities. The bill is a win-win for the state and public, and is fair and equitable to everyone.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Representative Barkis, prime sponsor; Dan Dickerson, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission's American with Disability Act Advisory Committee; Nate Pamplin, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Kay Ginter; and Bruce Armstrong.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.