

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5552

As Passed Senate, January 28, 2022

Title: An act relating to modifying miscellaneous provisions impacting department of fish and wildlife licensing requirements.

Brief Description: Modifying miscellaneous provisions impacting department of fish and wildlife licensing requirements.

Sponsors: Senators Van De Wege, Mullet and Nobles; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/13/22, 1/20/22 [DP].

Floor Activity: Passed Senate: 1/28/22, 44-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the age at which a person qualifies as a youth for fishing licenses from age 15 to under age 16 and eliminates the \$5 youth fishing license fee.
- Allows the use of temporary freshwater fishing licenses for the lowland lakes fishing season opener.
- Authorizes the creation and sale of a multi-year combination license at a fee lower than the combined cost of the licenses.
- Makes various changes to hunter education and residency requirements for hunting and fishing licenses.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Member; Honeyford, Rolfes, Short and Stanford.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

Background: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the DFW director, and the DFW Commission (Commission) are authorized to regulate state fish and wildlife resources and to issue licenses for fishing and hunting activities.

Licenses. *Youth.* Youth is defined as a person 15 years of age for fishing and under 16 years of age for hunting. The minimum age requirement for a fishing license is 15 years of age and the youth license costs \$5.

Combination. The Commission has the authority to create and sell annual combination licenses for all hunting and fishing activities at or below a fee equal to the total cost of the individual license contained within any combination. A Family Fishing Weekend license allows up to six anglers, a combination of one or two residents plus four or five youth, to fish during specified times determined by DFW rule.

Temporary. A temporary fishing license, which is valid up to three days, permits the holder to fish or possess fish, shellfish, and seaweed taken from state or offshore waters. This license, except for active duty military personnel, is currently not valid on game fish species for an eight consecutive day period beginning on the opening day of the lowland lake fishing season.

Hunter Education. All individuals born after January 1, 1972, must show proof they have completed a hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license for the first time. The course must include at least ten hours of instruction covering firearms and outdoor safety, hunter responsibility, and wildlife management. To receive proof of completion, a person must pass an exam, either in a classroom setting or online, and demonstrate safe firearms handling skills in the field. Members of the United States military and certain law enforcement officers who complete the online hunter education course are exempt from the field firearms skills portion.

Vehicle Access Pass. The DFW Vehicle Access Pass grants access to DFW lands and is issued with certain hunting and fishing licenses. The purchaser of a personal use shellfish and seaweed license does not receive a DFW Vehicle Access Pass with the purchase of that license.

Summary of Bill: The minimum age requirement for a fishing license is increased from 15 to 16 years of age and the \$5 fee for a youth license is eliminated. The restriction on the use of a temporary combination fishing license on game species on the opening day of the

lowland lake fishing season is removed. License holders must be 16 years of age or older to purchase a two-pole stamp to use a second pole while fishing. The family fishing weekend license is eliminated.

The Commission is authorized to offer a one-time hunting license discount up to \$20 to first-time resident hunters who complete a hunter education program. The ten hour minimum time requirement for the course instruction on safe handling of firearms, safety conservation, and sporting behavior is eliminated. The license requirement for an individual to have held a Washington hunting license for the prior three years for the DFW director to authorize a once in a lifetime, one license- year deferral of hunter education training for individuals who are accompanied by a nondeferred Washington-licensed hunter is removed. Retired members of the United States military and current and retired peace officers are exempt from the firearms skills portions of hunter education. The residency definition of active duty members of the United States military, as well as their spouses and children, is modified so service members and their family members qualify for licenses at resident rates. Out-of-state, full-time post-secondary students may purchase hunting and fishing licenses at resident rates.

The Commission may create and sell multi-year combination licenses for all hunting and fishing activities at or below a fee equal to the total cost of the individual license contained within any combination. The DFW director may offer temporary discount promotional pricing to increase angler, hunting, or wildlife viewing participation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is an agency request legislation to improve licenses and make them more user friendly.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Kevin Van De Wege, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: PRO: Tom McBride, WDFW.