

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5862

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks, January 18, 2024

**Title:** An act relating to hunting and fishing licenses for nonresident college students.

**Brief Description:** Concerning hunting and fishing licenses for nonresident college students.

**Sponsors:** Senators Fortunato, McCune, Padden, Warnick and Wilson, L..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/15/24, 1/18/24  
[DP, w/oRec].

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Directs the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue a fishing or hunting license to a student enrolled in an institution of higher education at the same cost as a Washington resident license.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Van De Wege, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Liias, Shewmake, Short, Stanford, Wagoner and Warnick.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Muzzall, Ranking Member.

**Staff:** Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

**Background:** The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) operates under a statutory mandate to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage Washington's wildlife, food fish,

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*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.*

game fish, and shellfish. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has been delegated the responsibility to carry out this mandate at the direction of the Commission, which includes establishing basic rules and regulations governing the time, place, manner, and methods used to harvest or enjoy fish and wildlife.

The WDFW issues various licensing documents, including licenses, tags, endorsements, and permits for hunting and fishing in Washington. A variety of different resident and nonresident hunting and fishing licenses are available at different rates for residents and nonresidents. For example, the total cost of a resident annual deer license is \$44.90, compared to the total cost of a nonresident license of \$434.30. A resident annual fishing combination license has a total cost of \$55.35, compared to the total cost of a nonresident license of \$124.65. A resident is a natural person who has maintained a permanent place of abode within the state for at least 90 days immediately preceding an application for a license, has established by formal evidence an intent to continue residing within the state, is not licensed to hunt or fish as a resident in another state or country, and is not receiving resident benefits of another state or country.

**Summary of Bill:** A qualifying student attending an accredited institution of higher education must be issued a combination fishing license or any hunting license at the same cost charged to a nondisabled Washington resident for the same license. To qualify, a student must be a full-time student who is enrolled in and attending an accredited institution of higher education in Washington for at least six months immediately prior to the date of application for any license. A student is deemed full time under the rules of the educational institution the student is attending.

**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: Hunting and fishing generate approximately \$1.4 billion in economic benefits per year, and this bill encourages more participation by college age students in these activities. Several states offer resident rates to nonresident college students for hunting and fishing licenses. By offering resident rates, it allows students to maintain access and be able to participate in hunting and fishing activities in Washington.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Phil Fortunato, Prime Sponsor; Marie Neumiller, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.