
Senate Fiscal Agency
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SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

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House Bill 5053 (as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Mike Kowall
House Committee: Great Lakes and Tourism
Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 11-29-99

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to designate a Saturday and Sunday in January and February each year as "Free Winter Fishing Days".

Currently, the DNR may designate one day or two consecutive days each year as free fishing days, during which a resident or nonresident may fish for all species of fish in all State waters designated by the DNR without purchasing a license or permit. The bill would allow the DNR to designate one other day or two other consecutive days each year as free fishing days, in addition to the free winter fishing days that the bill would require.

Under the Act, a person who fishes during the free fishing days has the same privileges as a holder of a limited fishing license issued under the Act. A holder of a limited fishing license is entitled to take all aquatic species as prescribed by law. "Aquatic species" means any fish, reptile, amphibian, mollusk, aquatic insect, or crustacea or part thereof.

MCL 324.43534

Legislative Analyst: N. Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill would reduce the funds available for game and fish protection programs in the State by a small, indeterminate amount. The Department of Natural Resources estimates this loss at \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Under current law, revenues from the sale of State hunting and fishing licenses flow to the Game and Fish Protection Fund. These funds are used to support Statewide hunting and fishing programs. A variety of State fishing licenses may be purchased, including those valid only for specific species or limited duration. This bill would reduce the revenues generated on the sale of fishing licenses that otherwise would be sold on the designated "free winter fishing days".

The exact revenue loss cannot be calculated. However, the DNR sells approximately 800-900 fishing licenses each January. These figures include the sales of short-term (24-hour) licenses as well as annual fishing permits. Fishing permits range in price from \$3, for 24-hour senior licenses, to \$39 for an annual, nonresident license. Annual permits are valid from March 1 through March 31 of each year. January license sales generate approximately \$3,000 to \$3,500 in Game and Fish Protection revenue. This bill would reduce these sales collections.

In addition, the Department would have to shift additional Game and Fish Protection revenue from other programs to support and promote the designated "free winter fishing days". These additional costs cannot be calculated.

Fiscal Analyst: P. Alderfer