
Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

SFA**BILL ANALYSIS**

Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

House Bill 4860 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Mickey Mortimer
House Committee: Conservation and Outdoor Recreation
Senate Committee: Hunting, Fishing and Forestry

Date Completed: 3-7-02

RATIONALE

According to the National Wild Turkey Federation, there are now an estimated 5.6 million wild turkeys nationwide and approximately 150,000 in Michigan. Under the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA), all applications for a wild turkey hunting license must be entered into a lottery designed and run by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). According to the DNR, there are many areas in the southern Lower Peninsula where there is an overabundance of wild turkeys. In these areas, despite the lottery, most hunters who apply for a license are guaranteed one since the turkey numbers warrant unlimited participation. Therefore, it has been suggested that the Natural Resources Commission be allowed to determine the necessity of a lottery in certain areas, depending on the Commission's wild turkey management goals.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the NREPA to allow the Natural Resources Commission to issue an order, subject to Section 40113a, requiring that all applications for wild turkey hunting licenses, or applications for wild turkey hunting licenses for certain geographic areas, be entered into a lottery designed and run by the DNR. (Section 40113a gives the Commission the exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game in Michigan, and requires Commission orders regarding the taking of game to be made following a public meeting and an opportunity for public input.)

In addition, the Act requires the DNR to charge a nonrefundable application fee of up

to \$4 for each person who applies for a wild turkey hunting license. The bill, instead, would permit the DNR to charge a nonrefundable application fee of up to \$4 for each wild turkey hunting license application that was entered into a lottery.

Currently, the Act also requires \$3 of the wild turkey hunting application fee to be used for scientific research, biological survey work on wild turkeys, and wild turkey management. The bill, instead, specifies that the amount of the wild turkey hunting application fee, if any, but not more than \$3, would have to be used for those purposes.

MCL 324.43524

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

By allowing the Commission to determine whether a turkey hunting license lottery would be used in certain areas, the bill would provide flexibility in the management of wild turkeys. Evidently, Michigan's wild turkey population has flourished and expanded to approximately 150,000 birds since the establishment of the law. The lottery process is no longer needed in some areas to protect and manage the wild turkey population, according to the Department. Ballot Proposal G of 1996 amended the NREPA to give the Commission exclusive authority to regulate the taking of game in the State, using principles of sound scientific management. The bill would allow wild turkey hunting policies to be determined

by professional wildlife managers while encouraging hunting as a legitimate and useful tool in the management of the wild turkey resource.

Supporting Argument

The bill would broaden turkey hunting opportunities while maintaining hunter satisfaction. According to the DNR, hunters who currently apply for the final hunt period are usually guaranteed a license. The bill, however, would accommodate those last-minute hunters who failed to apply for a license through the lottery several months in advance.

Opposing Argument

The current statewide lottery system for wild turkey hunting licenses has served hunters well. It maintains a quality hunting experience, spreads out hunters across the State, and helps to avoid depletion of Michigan's wild turkey population.

Response: The bill would not require the elimination of the lottery system in its entirety. It would allow the Commission to determine the necessity of a lottery depending on factors such as the wild turkey population and number of turkey hunters of a particular geographic area.

Legislative Analyst: Nobuko Nagata

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate impact on revenue to the Game and Fish Protection Fund. Elimination of the application fee where a lottery was not held would result in the loss of revenue to the Fund. On the other hand, elimination of the lottery, in some management units, could result in an increase in revenue if additional licenses were sold. If the fall 2001 experience is used, and it is assumed that lotteries would not be held in units where applicants were fewer than available licenses, then the revenue loss would have been approximately \$75,000. If, however, the elimination of the lottery in some units resulted in the sale of all available licenses, then the increase in game and fish revenue could have been up to \$198,000.

Fiscal Analyst: Pam Graham

H0102\s4860a

This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.