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Senate Bill 1148 (Substitute S-2 as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Mike Prusi
Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act

Date Completed: 9-24-04

RATIONALE

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act permits a member of the military, who is from Michigan and is stationed outside of this State, to obtain a hunting or fishing license for \$1--instead of, for example, \$14 for a deer license or a restricted fishing license (all species except trout and salmon). The \$1 military license is valid for a two-week period designated by the person, and may be used only during the season in which the license otherwise would be valid. Presently, a \$1 license may be obtained only from one of nine Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Operations Service Centers. In order to make these licenses more accessible, the DNR is instituting a policy change, beginning October 1, 2004, that will enable retail license vendors to sell the \$1 military licenses. Some people believe that this policy should be written into the law. It also has been suggested that the \$1 licenses should be available to members of the Michigan National Guard.

stationed outside this State. Under the bill, the documentation would have to be presented to a licensing agent.

“Member of the military” means 1) a person who is a regularly enlisted or commissioned officer in the armed forces of the United States who, at the time of enlistment, was a resident of Michigan, or 2) a person who is a reserve component soldier, sailor, airman, or marine called to Federal active duty and was a resident of Michigan when he or she was called to active duty. In either case, the person must be stationed outside of this State and must have maintained his or her residence in this State for the purpose of obtaining a driver license and/or voter registration. The bill would add a member of the Michigan National Guard to the category that includes members of the reserves.

MCL 324.43536a

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow a member of the military to obtain a \$1 hunting or fishing license from a Department of Natural Resources licensing agent; and to allow members of the Michigan National Guard to obtain a \$1 license.

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

Obtaining a fishing or hunting license for \$1 is one of the few perks available to active duty service men and women, and offering the \$1 license is a small way for the State to express its gratitude for the sacrifices they make. Fishing or hunting can give these people an opportunity to relax and spend time with their families while they are on leave. Going to a DNR Operations Service Center, however, is highly inconvenient to people who have to drive hundreds of miles

Presently, a member of the military may obtain any license under Part 435 for which a lottery is not required for \$1, upon presentation of leave papers, duty papers, military orders, or other evidence acceptable to the DNR verifying that he or she is

to get there, and may discourage some people on leave from purchasing a \$1 license. Recognizing this, the DNR will allow its 1,700-plus license vendors throughout the State to sell the \$1 military licenses as of October 1. By putting this into statute, the bill would ensure that the policy could not be changed without legislative approval, and would send a clear message that Michigan supports its troops.

Supporting Argument

As the war in Iraq continues, members of the National Guard increasingly are being sent overseas to areas of armed conflict. It would be appropriate to include Michigan National Guard members among those who may buy a hunting or fishing license for \$1, subject to the criteria that presently apply to members of the armed forces reserves.

Legislative Analyst: Suzanne Lowe

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would result in a reduction in revenue to the Game and Fish Protection Fund. There could be an increase in the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold at the reduced cost of \$1 due to the availability of the licenses at all licensing agents and extension of eligibility to members of the Michigan National Guard. In FY 2002-03, 364 hunting and fishing licenses were sold at the \$1 rate to members of the military.

Fiscal Analyst: Jessica Runnels

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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.