



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 349 (Substitute S-1 as reported)
Senate Bill 409 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Jim Barcia
Committee: Hunting, Fishing and Outdoor Recreation

Date Completed: 4-1-09

RATIONALE

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act sets the amount of hunting and fishing license fees but allows the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide a discount on licenses for marketing purposes, the purchase of multiple licenses, or the harvest of antlerless deer. The Act also establishes a one-year period during which a hunting or fishing license is valid, subject to an exception for limited seasons. It has been suggested that revising the circumstances under which a discount may be granted, eliminating a limit on the discount, and giving the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) flexibility to determine the time period for which a license is valid, could help reverse the State's downward trend in hunting and fishing and assist the Department in meeting harvest and management objectives.

CONTENT

Senate Bill 349 (S-1) would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to revise provisions concerning discounts on hunting and fishing license fees.

Senate Bill 409 would amend Part 435 to revise provisions related to the period that a hunting or fishing license or permit is valid.

The bills are described below in further detail.

Senate Bill 349 (S-1)

Under Part 435, the DNR may discount the price of a license up to 15% for marketing purposes to increase participation in hunting and fishing activities. Additionally, the price of the antlerless deer license may be reduced or eliminated in specific areas to help achieve the harvest of antlerless deer. If a person purchases four or more licenses for the same person at the same time, a sportsperson discount of 15% must be provided. Waterfowl hunting licenses and limited fishing licenses are not eligible for the sportsperson discount.

The bill would delete the provisions regarding the antlerless deer license and sportsperson discount, as well as the 15% limit on a discount offered for marketing purposes. Under the bill, the price of any license or application fee could be discounted or eliminated to achieve a harvest or management objective for that species.

Senate Bill 409

Currently, all licenses issued under Part 435 are valid from March 1 through March 31 of the following year, except for licenses or permits that are valid for a designated limited season. Under the bill, all licenses issued would be valid from March 1 through March 31 of the following year, or as otherwise provided by order of the Natural Resources Commission. The DNR would have to designate the period of validity on the license or permit.

Senate Bill 409

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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

The bills would assist the DNR in managing game, as well as encourage hunter and angler recruitment and retention. For example, under Senate Bill 349 (S-1), the Department could offer a greater discount to a person who purchased licenses several years in a row. Under Senate Bill 409, the NRC could authorize the sale of licenses that would be valid for more than one year, thus making it more convenient for sportspeople to participate time and again. By encouraging consistent license purchasing practices, the bills would help foster the next generation of hunters and anglers and alleviate some of the Department's budgetary pressures.

Response: Senate Bill 349 (S-1) should provide for partnerships between the DNR and nonprofit sportsperson and conservation groups for marketing purposes. Through such partnerships, the related organizations could actively promote license purchases at a discount to their members. While current law does not preclude the Department from pursuing these arrangements, express statutory authorization could be beneficial.

With regard to Senate Bill 409, a mechanism for the allocation of revenue from the potential multiyear licenses should be considered to ensure that those dollars were not all spent within the first year.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

Senate Bill 349 (S-1)

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the State. An increase in license discounts or temporary elimination of the fee for harvest-management purposes would result in a loss to the Game and Fish Protection Fund, which receives the revenue from hunting and fishing licenses fees. However, a change in discount practices would not be required by the bill.

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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.