



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 1013 (Substitute S-1 as reported)  
Sponsor: Senator Jason E. Allen  
Committee: Hunting, Fishing and Outdoor Recreation

*(as passed by the Senate)*

Date Completed: 2-22-10

### **RATIONALE**

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Michigan's moose population was nearly eliminated. The decline was thought to be a result of habitat changes, human exploitation, brainworm, and wolf predation. In the mid-1980s, 61 moose were relocated from Canada to the Upper Peninsula in an effort to spur a population growth. Today, the State's moose population is estimated at 500 to 600 animals and is projected to continue growing. In light of the repopulation project's success, it has been suggested that Michigan should establish a moose hunting season.

The orders would have to provide that at least one moose could be taken during each season.

The bill would prohibit a resident from hunting moose without a license. The fee for a moose license would be \$100, and the DNRE could establish a nonrefundable application fee of up to \$4 for each person who applied for a license. In addition, the DNRE could issue a kill tag with, or as part of, a moose hunting license.

### **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend Parts 401 (Wildlife Conservation) and 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:**

- **Require the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to issue orders establishing an annual moose hunting season.**
- **Prohibit a resident from hunting moose without a moose hunting license.**
- **Establish a \$100 fee for a moose license, and authorize the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) to establish an application fee of up to \$4.**
- **Create the Moose Hunting Advisory Council.**
- **Require the Advisory Council to issue a report on whether the moose hunting season should be expanded.**

Specifically, within one year after the bill took effect, the NRC would have to issue orders establishing an annual moose hunting

The bill provides that Section 43526(2) would apply with respect to a moose hunting license. (Under that section, the Department may issue a kill tag with, or as part of, a deer license. The kill tag must bear the license number, and also may include space for other pertinent information required by the Department. If issued, the kill tag is part of the license.)

The bill would create the Moose Hunting Advisory Council within the DNRE. The Council would consist of the following seven members:

- The DNRE Director or his or her designee.
- One member, appointed by the Director, representing an organization that promotes conservation in Michigan.
- Two members, appointed by the Director, representing organizations that promote hunting and fishing in Michigan.
- One member appointed by the Director from a list of three names provided by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- One member appointed by the Director from a list of three names provided by the Senate Majority Leader.

-- One member selected by the Michigan Intertribal Council.

Within 60 days after the bill took effect, Advisory Council members would have to be appointed and the DNRE Director would have to call its first meeting. At that meeting, the Council would have to elect a chairperson and other officers it considered necessary or appropriate. After the first meeting, the Council would have to meet at least quarterly, or more frequently at the call of the chairperson or if requested by a majority of the members.

The Council would be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Council members would serve without compensation, but could be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

Within 12 months after the bill took effect, the Council would have to submit to the DNRE, the NRC, and the Legislature a report that made recommendations on whether the moose hunting season established under the bill should be expanded in Michigan. The report would have to take into account the effect an expanded moose hunting season would have on the State's moose population and the potential economic benefits of such a season. If the Council recommended an expanded season, the report also would have to contain a recommended season length and the number of moose to be taken.

The provisions regarding the Advisory Council would be repealed 12 months after the bill took effect.

Proposed MCL 324.40110a et al.

## **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**

It has been reported that the State's moose population is increasing by about 10% every year. At that rate, the population could reach approximately 1,000 animals - a level at which a restricted hunt is thought to be sustainable - in the next few years.

Outdoor recreation is a valuable component of Michigan's tourism industry. The State's lottery system for elk and bear hunting licenses has generated much interest among hunters; a moose license likely would generate similar interest. A moose hunt would draw people to the Upper Peninsula, generating revenue for local economies and for the DNRE through license and application fees. In addition, the moose population would benefit from the important role hunters play in wildlife management under DNRE regulation, as demonstrated by the permit system applicable to bear and elk hunting.

An initial limited hunt, followed by a thorough investigation into whether it should be expanded, would ensure that decisions regarding moose hunting were science-based and took into consideration the impact on the moose population in relation to the associated economic benefit.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The Moose Hunting Advisory Council would serve uncompensated but necessary costs incurred by Council members could be reimbursed. Costs would likely include items such as mileage and hotel stays for members traveling long distances to meetings. These costs would not be very significant and would not be ongoing since the bill would abolish the Council after 12 months.

If the Natural Resources Commission decided to expand the hunt, there likely would be various costs associated. The DNRE currently monitors the moose herd in Michigan, however, so it is likely that the costs would be limited to those directly related to the license application and issuance process and would be more than covered by the \$100 license fee and the \$4 application fee that the Department could levy. It is unknown how many applications the DNRE would receive, but in 2009 nearly 40,000 people paid the \$4 fee to apply for the black bear hunt. Funds received by the Department for hunting licenses and for license applications go into the Game and Fish Protection Fund.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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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.