

Legislative Analysis



MENTORED YOUTH HUNTING PROGRAM FOR HUNTERS UNDER 10 YEARS OLD

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House Bill 4371 (Substitute H-2)

Sponsor: Rep. Peter Pettalia

Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation

Complete to 3-21-11

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4371 AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE 3-15-11

The bill would allow a hunting license to be issued to a child under 10 years old as part of a Mentored Youth Hunting Program to be established by the Natural Resources Commission. The mentored youth hunting license would be established with a \$7.50 fee.

The license would include a resident small game license, combination deer license, all species fishing license, spring and fall turkey hunting licenses, and a resident fur harvester license.

Currently to receive a hunting license, a child must be at least 10 years old or, if the license is for hunting deer, bear, or elk with a firearm, at least 12 years old. The bill would strike that provision. (See **Background Information** for rules about young hunters.) Public Act 282 of 2006 lowered the minimum age for a hunting license from 12 to 10 and lowered the minimum firearm license from 14 to 12 years. That act also created the apprentice hunting license for individuals with no previous hunting experience.

Under House Bill 4371, the Natural Resources Commission would be required to establish by order a Mentored Youth Hunting Program within one year after the bill's effective date of September 1, 2011. The order would have to provide that: (1) a mentor be at least 21 years of age; (2) a mentor possess a valid license to hunt, other than an apprentice license, before engaging in the program; and (3) an individual could not be a mentor without presenting proof of previous hunting experience in the form of a previous hunting license, other than an apprentice license, or a certification of completion of training in hunter safety issued by Michigan, another state, a province of Canada, or another country.

A minor under 10 years of age could obtain a mentored youth hunting license, but could not hunt game under that license unless he or she complies with all requirements of the program established by the Natural Resources Commission.

Four years after the date the bill was enacted and every four years after that, the department would be required to submit a report to the standing committees of the Senate and House with primary responsibility for conservation and outdoor recreation issues to

evaluate whether the fee revenue received by the department from the mentored youth hunting licenses is adequate to administer the program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The following information is derived from the website of the Department of Natural Resources.

Rules for Young Hunters (Up to 16 Years of Age)

The following table explains which species youth, up to 16 years old, are allowed to hunt.

Species	Under 10	10 & 11	12 & 13	14-16
Small game and woodcock	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Waterfowl	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Turkey	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Fur Harvester	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Trap-only fur harvester	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Archery deer and bear	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Archery elk	No	No	Yes*	Yes
Firearm deer and bear	No	No	Yes* **	Yes
Firearm Elk	No	No	Yes* **	Yes

*Must be accompanied by an adult.

** 12 and 13 year olds can only hunt deer, bear, and elk with a firearm on private land.

Firearm Deer Hunting Rules for Youth Hunters

The following restrictions apply to youth hunters who participate in any firearm deer season:

Youths 10-11 years of age during the firearm seasons are limited to archery-only equipment using an antlerless or combination license as appropriate for the given season. Archery and junior archery licenses are only valid for the archery seasons.

Youths 12-13 years of age may hunt with a firearm only on private land and Commercial Forest Land (a public-land antlerless deer license is required to hunt antlerless deer on Commercial Forest Land).

All hunters under age 17 must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or someone 18 or older designated by their parent or guardian. A parent or legal guardian must accompany a youth under age 17. For all youth-only firearm deer seasons, an adult accompanying a youth firearm deer hunter cannot possess or carry a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow, except if the adult is a veteran with 100 percent disability, and the adult accompanying the youth does not need a deer hunting license, unless the youth is an apprentice hunter

All hunters participating in a firearm season must wear hunter orange.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Under the provisions of House Bill 4371, the NRC shall issue an order that establishes a mentored youth hunting program in Michigan. It would be the responsibility of the DNR to establish and administer that program. The bill would have no significant fiscal impact to the DNR in that it is anticipated that the new revenue from the \$7.50 mentored youth hunting license would offset any additional administration expenses to the Department.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (3-15-11)

Ducks Unlimited supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Bear Hunters Association supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Conservation Foundation supports the bill. (3-15-11)

Michigan Duck Hunters Association supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Hunting Dog Federation supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Farm Bureau supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Gun Owners supports the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan Trappers and Predator Callers support the bill. (3-8-11)

Michigan United Conservation Clubs support the bill (3-8-11)

National Wild Turkey Foundation supports the bill. (3-15-11)

U.S. Sportmen's Alliance supports the bill. (3-8-11)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.