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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 207 (as introduced 3-1-11)
Sponsor: Senator Joe Hune
Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Date Completed: 3-9-11

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:

- **Eliminate the minimum hunting age.**
- **Require the Natural Resources Commission to establish a mentored youth hunting program.**
- **Establish a mentored youth hunting license for a person younger than 10, and allow a licensee to hunt with a mentor who was at least 21 in accordance with the program.**

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2011.

Minimum Hunting Age

Under Part 435, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may issue a hunting license to a minor child (a person under 17) if all of the following requirements are met:

- A parent or legal guardian applies for the license on behalf of the minor child.
- The parent or guardian represents that the requirements of Part 435 regarding the conditions under which a minor may hunt will be complied with.
- The minor child is at least 10 years old or, if the license is a license to hunt deer, bear, or elk with a firearm, at least 12 years old.

The bill would retain these provisions but delete the minimum age requirements.

Part 435 requires the DNR to issue a combination deer license that authorizes an individual to hunt deer both during the firearm deer seasons and during the bow and arrow seasons. The bill would eliminate a provision stating that a combination deer license issued to a person younger than 12 is valid only for taking deer with a bow and arrow, until the person is at least 12 years old.

Under Part 435, the fee for a resident fur harvester's license is \$15. For a resident or nonresident who is 12 through 16 years old, the fee is discounted 50% from the cost of the resident license. The bill would refer to a minor child, rather than a person who is 12 through 16 years old.

Mentored Youth Hunting Program & License

NRC Order. Within one year after the bill took effect, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) would have to issue an order establishing a mentored youth hunting program. The

order would have to require that a mentor be at least 21 years old before participating in the program, and that a mentor possess a valid hunting license before engaging in any mentored youth hunting program. The order also would have to provide that an individual could not be a mentor unless he or she presented proof of previous hunting experience in the form of a previous hunting license or certification of completion of training in hunter safety issued by the State of Michigan, another state, a province of Canada, or another country.

Mentored Youth License. Under the bill, a minor who was younger than 10 years old could obtain a mentored youth hunting license. The minor could not hunt game under such a license unless he or she complied with all requirements of the mentored youth hunting program established by the NRC. The fee for a mentored youth hunting license would be \$7.50, and would include all of the following:

- Resident small game license.
- Combination deer license.
- All species fishing license.
- Turkey hunting license.
- Resident fur harvester's license.

The DNR could adjust the license to ensure that it met the eligibility requirements set forth in 50 CFR 80.10. (That Federal regulation prescribes requirements for state hunting and fishing licenses to ensure the proper apportionment of Federal funds under the Wildlife Restoration Act and Sport Fish Restoration Act.)

Minor Child: Hunting Conditions. Part 435 prohibits a parent or legal guardian of a minor child from permitting or allowing the child to hunt game under the authority of a license except under specified conditions. Depending on the child's age and the type of license, the child might be limited to hunting on private property; he or she might have to be accompanied by a parent or guardian, or another authorized person who is at least 18 or 21; or both conditions might apply.

Also, under the bill, a parent or guardian could allow a minor child who was younger than 10 to hunt only with a mentor in compliance with the mentored youth hunting program.

MCL 324.43517 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would require the NRC to establish, and the DNR to administer a youth hunting program. Youth hunting licenses would cost \$7.50, which would bring some unknown amount of revenue into the department. The revenue would be credited to the Game and Fish Fund. The Department also would experience some increased costs as a result of administering the program. It is unknown whether the new revenue would exceed the additional costs; therefore, the fiscal impact of the bill is indeterminate.

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.