

PROHIBIT COLLECTION OF STATE PARK FEES ON FREE FISHING WEEKENDS

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House Bill 4983 (Proposed H-1 substitute)
Sponsor: Rep. Bruce R. Rendon
Committee: Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
Complete to 10-21-15

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4983 would amend Section 74116 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) by adding free fishing days to the list of instances when a visitor does not need to pay for entrance to a state park.

Specifically, the bill would state that when the director of the Department of Natural Resources has waived the requirement to obtain a fishing license in order to fish on that day, a person visiting the park would be exempt from the requirement to have a motor vehicle permit or recreation passport tab or sticker and also would not be subject to a parking fee at a state park, state recreation area, or state-operated public boating access site.

The bill would take effect 90 days after being enacted.

MCL 324.74116

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Presently, there are four free fishing days each year, scheduled on one weekend in the summer and one in the winter. During these free fishing weekends, individuals wishing to fish are not required to possess a valid Michigan fishing license. Presently, individuals 17 years of age and older are required to possess a valid fishing license outside of these specially designated days.

The other situations in which an individual may enter a state park without a motor vehicle permit or recreation passport tab or sticker are as follows:

- While the motor vehicle is being driven or parked within an established federal, state, or county highway within a state park.
- If the motor vehicle is used in the operation or maintenance of a state park, is an emergency motor vehicle, is a state owned or law enforcement motor vehicle, or is a private motor vehicle being operated on official state business.
- If the motor vehicle is specially registered by certain veterans of the armed forces or individuals who have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

- If and to the extent the DNR waives the requirements for department-sponsored events or other circumstances as determined by the director or the director's designee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4983 would likely have a negative fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the extent of this impact is unknown. Revenue generated from Recreation Passport sales and daily parking fees could be forgone if HB 4983 becomes law. For example, DNR collected in excess of \$57,000 in Recreation Passport revenue during the most recent Free Fishing Weekend in June 2015.

Recreation Passport sales generated an estimated \$24.2 million in FY 2013-14, which was divided between DNR and the Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (Secretary of State) according to statutory formula. It is uncertain exactly what portion, if any, of this annual revenue would be lost during biannual free fishing weekends due to HB 4983.

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