



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 816 (as introduced 2-24-16)
Sponsor: Senator Patrick J. Colbeck
Committee: Veterans, Military Affairs and Homeland Security

Date Completed: 5-26-16

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow an operator of a motor vehicle to enter a State park or State-operated public boating access site without having a resident recreation passport or nonresident permit, if the vehicle's operator or passenger had a valid, government-issued veteran ID.

Under the Act, the operator of a resident motor vehicle may not enter a State park or designated State-operated public boating access site with the vehicle unless the vehicle has a registration tab or sticker marked to show that the recreation passport fee has been paid has been paid for that vehicle. Payment of the recreation passport fee authorizes entry into all State parks and recreation areas and designated State-operated public boating access sites until the motor vehicle registration expires.

The operator of a nonresident motor vehicle or commercial motor vehicle may not enter any State park or State-operated public boating access site with that vehicle unless a valid motor vehicle permit is affixed to the windshield. An annual motor vehicle park permit or seasonal pass for a nonresident motor vehicle must be affixed permanently for that year or season.

The bill specifies that these requirements would not apply if the operator or a passenger of the motor vehicle possessed a valid, government-issued veteran identification, such as a driver license indicating his or her veteran status. The individual would have to produce the veteran ID if requested by a conservation officer or park and recreation officer.

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

MCL 324.74116 & 324.78119

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could have a negative fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) of about \$2.2 million per year in reduced recreation passport receipts. Of that amount, local units of government would receive about \$220,000 less each year from the Local Public Recreation Facilities Fund, which receives revenue from the sale of recreation passports through statutory formula.

The DNR does not collect demographic data that is of use in determining how many veterans currently purchase recreation passports for their vehicles, but an estimate can be obtained by assuming that they are no more or less likely to purchase a recreation passport than those who have not served. The number of veterans living in Michigan was about 658,000 as of

September 30, 2014, and the population of Michigan over age 18 was about 7,615,000, putting the adult population of Michigan who are veterans at about 8.65%. In fiscal year 2014-15, the DNR received about \$25.0 million in recreation passport revenue; if 8.65% of this revenue were lost under the bill because no veterans purchased a passport, the cost would be about \$2.2 million.

It is worth mentioning that the bill would not actually allow veterans to obtain a free recreation passport; rather, it would exempt the operator of a vehicle from the requirement to have one if a veteran were the operator of the vehicle or a passenger in it. Veterans who own a vehicle that may be driven by someone else, such as a spouse or a child, when they are not present still could elect to purchase a recreation passport so the vehicle could be driven into a State park, boat launch, or recreation area. Therefore, the actual revenue lost under the bill could be mitigated to some extent.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton