

Legislative Analysis



ACCOMPANIED MINORS HUNTING DEER, BEAR, OR ELK ON PUBLIC LAND: CHANGE AGE FROM 14 TO 10

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House Bill 5711 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Triston Cole

Committee: Natural Resources

Complete to 5-1-18

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

(Enacted as Public Act 399 of 2018)

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 5711 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to change (from 14 years old to 10) the age at which minor children can hunt deer, bear, or elk with a firearm on public land.

FISCAL IMPACT: It is unclear whether House Bill 5711 would affect revenues for the DNR. The statutory changes in the bill are likely to expand hunting opportunities for minor children, but the effect of this expansion on hunting license sales is indeterminate at present. The sale of hunting and fishing licenses generated approximately \$62.1 million in FY 2016-17. The bill is unlikely to affect costs for the department and would have no fiscal impact on local units of government.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Currently, a minor child who is at least 10 but less than 14 years old can hunt under a license to take deer, bear, or elk with a firearm only on private property and only when accompanied by his or her parent or guardian or by another individual authorized by a parent or guardian who is at least 18 years old or, for an apprentice license, who is 21 years old and licensed to hunt that game under a license that is not an apprentice license.

According to the bill sponsor, many youth hunters do not have access to private land, and under current law they are unable to hunt deer, bear, or elk on public lands. This legislation was introduced in the hope of expanding opportunities for young hunters in Michigan.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 5711 would eliminate the provisions restricting those minor children to hunting deer, bear, or elk with a firearm only on private property.

Under the bill, a minor child who is at least 10 years old could hunt any game on land on which a parent or guardian is regularly domiciled, whether accompanied or alone, or on other public or private land if he or she is accompanied by a parent or guardian or by another individual authorized by a parent or guardian who is at least 18 years old or, for an apprentice license, who is 21 years old and licensed to hunt that game under a license that is not an apprentice license.

MCL 324.43517

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Supporters of the bill argue that there are three key ingredients for successfully recruiting hunters to Michigan: social support for hunting, time to hunt, and places to hunt. This bill would expand places to hunt and also shows public support for hunting, which will help bolster hunting prospects in Michigan.

Supporters of the bill also argue that the current prohibition is a small oversight from the original passage of the law because youth hunters can currently hunt on private lands open to the public (commonly known as “CFR” lands), but not other public lands. The bill would fix the previous error.

Against:

No arguments in opposition to the bill were presented during committee testimony.

POSITIONS:

Representatives of the following organizations indicated support for the bill (4-11-18):

- Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan United Conservation Clubs
- Michigan Bear Hunters Association
- Michigan Hunting Dog Federation
- Michigan State United Coon Hunters Association
- Upper Peninsula Bear Houndsmen Association
- Michigan State Foxhunter Association

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