

SPORT FISHING REGULATIONS

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House Bill 5866 as enacted

Public Act 529 of 2018

Sponsor: Rep. Joseph N. Bellino, Jr.

House Committee: Natural Resources

Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Complete to 2-15-19

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

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5866 would amend Part 487 (Sport Fishing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to revise, remove, or repeal various provisions concerning fishing in Michigan.

General revisions

Throughout the bill, “department” (DNR) would be replaced with “commission” (NRC) to reflect the NRC’s authority under current law to regulate the taking of fish in the waters of Michigan.¹

The bill would also change “person” to “individual” in several provisions involving fishing. Under NREPA, *person* means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, governmental entity, or other legal entity. The provisions in question apply to individuals and not to private or public organizations; the change in terminology would make this clear.

Provisions regarding nongame fish

Currently, the DNR may issue permits for the removal of dogfish, carp, garfish, sheepshead, and other noxious fish from all Michigan waters and sell or authorize the sale of those fish for the purpose of paying the expense of the removal. The DNR must be present at the time and place of the taking and the fish, with a representative of the DNR personally superintending. Additionally, a nonresident who operates under such a permit must pay the license fee as provided for nonresidents under the Michigan commercial fishing laws, in addition to the percentage paid to the state.

The bill would change the description of the fish to which this permit applies to include all fish that are not game fish and would remove the requirement that the DNR be present during the taking of the fish. The bill also would remove the provision requiring a nonresident operating under this permit to pay the nonresident license fee under Michigan commercial fishing laws as well as the percentage to the state.

The bill would further allow the DNR to issue a permit to a person that has registered a fishing tournament under NRC orders to allow fish, except for game fish, that are taken under a sport fishing license during the registered tournament to be donated to a person. Fish so donated would not be subject to Section 48723 of NREPA, which prohibits the sale, transportation, or

¹ See the HFA summary for SB 288 of 2013, enacted as Public Act 21 of 2013:

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billanalysis/House/pdf/2013-HLA-0288-5519C5CD.pdf>

possession of certain fish without a sport or commercial fishing license, and the person accepting the donated fish could process, utilize, and sell any fish product resulting from the donation.

Finally, the bill would require the person taking the fish or accepting the donated fish to retain a copy of the permit with the fish for transport and final disposition. The DNR could incorporate regulations and restrictions in any of the permits described above, including those regarding an authorized method of taking the fish. A person taking fish under the permits described above would have to conform to the permit's regulations and restrictions and any reporting standards established by the DNR.

Removed provisions

Currently, in the Great Lakes or recognized smelt waters, any number of hooks may be attached to a single line for the taking of smelt, alewife, or other bait fish. The bill would remove this provision, which would allow the NRC to determine how many hooks per single line could be used for taking bait fish.

The bill would also remove a provision that currently allows a person to have in his or her possession an artificial light of any kind for taking white bass.

Repealed provisions

Finally, the bill would repeal the following sections in Part 487 of NREPA:

- Section 48704: allowing gill net use for the taking of cisco.
- Section 48708: regulations regarding smelt nets, including licensing fees.
- Section 48714: prohibition of nonresident acting as a commercial fishing guide in Michigan.
- Sections 48715 through 48720, 48725, and 48733: fishing seasons and the taking of certain fish species, including the allowable means to take those species.
- Section 48727: prohibition of the snagging of fish and provision for DNR responsibility for managing fisheries on the Pere Marquette River at or above the site of the lamprey blocking weir. (The weir no longer exists.)

MCL 324.48703 et al.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5866 may result in decreased revenue for the Department of Natural Resources. The bill strikes a provision that requires a nonresident fishing license as provided under the commercial fishing laws of the state under certain conditions. The extent of this potential revenue loss is uncertain, as the number of nonresident anglers who would otherwise be subject to this provision is unclear. The bill is unlikely to affect departmental costs or have a fiscal impact on local units of government.

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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.