



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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House Bill 4957 (Substitute H-2 as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Gary Howell
House Committee: Natural Resources
Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Date Completed: 12-5-17

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow an individual who purchased a mentored youth hunting license to apply for and purchase additional hunting licenses.

Under the Act, a minor who is less than 10 years old may obtain a mentored youth hunting license. A minor who is less than 10 years old may not hunt game under a mentored youth hunting license unless he or she complies with all requirements of the Mentored Youth Hunting Program established by the Natural Resources Commission. (Please see **BACKGROUND** for an explanation of the Program.) The fee for a mentored youth hunting license is \$7.50 and must include all of the privileges conferred by all of the following: a) base license, b) deer license, c) all-species fishing license, d) spring and fall wild turkey hunting licenses, and e) fur harvester's license.

Under the bill, an individual who purchased a mentored youth hunting license could apply for or purchase additional licenses under current regulations, including all of the following:

- Antlerless deer licenses.
- A bear hunting license.
- An elk hunting license.

An individual hunting with an additional license purchased in addition to a mentored youth hunting license would have to comply with all requirements of the Program.

MCL 324.43502 & 324.43520

BACKGROUND

According to the Department of Natural Resources website, the Mentored Youth Hunting Program is designed to recruit youths into outdoor recreation at an earlier age. The Program allows a parent or other adult mentor to accompany a child under the age of 10 in the field to teach him or her how to hunt, trap, or fish. It eliminates the minimum hunting age in Michigan, and allows parents to determine if and when their children are ready to hunt.

The mentor is responsible for the youth hunter's actions in the field. A mentor must be at least 21 years old, have previous hunting experience, and possess a current Michigan hunting license (other than an apprentice license). A youth hunter must be within arm's length of the mentor at all times when handling a hunting device and when in the act of hunting. A mentor

may have not more than two hunting devices (a firearm, crossbow, or bow and arrow that may be lawfully used and possessed during the open season for the game species being hunted) in the field; however, there is no limit to the number of youths who may be mentored in the field.

The Wildlife Conservation Order contains requirements for the Program.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate, but likely positive fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and no fiscal impact on local units of government. The bill would allow holders of a mentored youth hunting license to apply for antlerless deer, bear, and elk licenses. Bear and elk licenses are limited each year, which requires prospective hunters to participate in a lottery for those limited numbers of licenses. The application fee to join the lottery is \$5, so an increased pool of prospective hunters would presumably increase the number of applications received each year. Increasing lottery participation would have no effect on the number of licenses issued for bear and elk, however, as those quotas are set separately from participation in the lottery.

The DNR also establishes license quotas for antlerless deer, but those quotas are significantly higher than the quotas set for bear or elk and in many areas of the State the number of applications is lower than the quota. For antlerless deer, then, in addition to increased application lottery revenue, the DNR also would see an increase in the number of antlerless licenses sold. All proceeds from hunting licenses and application lotteries are credited to the Game and Fish Protection Account, which receives a total of about \$75.0 million to \$80.0 million each year.

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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