

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 451 of 1994

324.1602 Department or officer; prosecution; search without warrant; private property; definition; common carrier not liable; issuance of warrant; seizures; probable cause.

Sec. 1602. (1) The department, or an officer appointed by the department, may file a complaint and commence proceedings against any person for a violation of any of the laws or statutes described in section 1601, without the sanction of the prosecuting attorney of the county in which the proceedings are commenced. In such a case, the officer is not obliged to furnish security for costs. The department, or an officer appointed by the department, may appear for the people in any court of competent jurisdiction in any cases for violation of any of the statutes or laws described in section 1601, may prosecute the cases in the same manner and with the same authority as the prosecuting attorney of any county in which the proceedings are commenced, and may sign vouchers for the payment of jurors' or witnesses' fees in those cases in the same manner and with the same authority as prosecuting attorneys in criminal cases. Whenever an officer appointed by the department has probable cause to believe that any of the statutes or laws mentioned in section 1601 have been or are being violated by any particular person, the officer has the power to search, without warrant, any boat, conveyance, vehicle, automobile, fish box, fish basket, game bag, game coat, or any other receptacle or place, except dwellings or dwelling houses, or within the curtilage of any dwelling house, in which nets, hunting or fishing apparatuses or appliances, wild birds, wild animals, or fish may be possessed, kept, or carried by the person, and an officer appointed by the department may enter into or upon any private or public property for that purpose or for the purpose of patrolling, investigating, or examining when he or she has probable cause for believing that any of the statutes or laws described in section 1601 have been or are being violated on that property. The term "private property" as used in this part does not include dwellings or dwelling houses or that which is within the curtilage of any dwelling house. An officer appointed by the department shall at any and all times seize and take possession of any and all nets, hunting or fishing apparatuses or appliances, or other property, wild birds, wild animals, or fish, or any part or parts thereof, which have been caught, taken, killed, shipped, or had in possession or under control, at a time, in a manner, or for a purpose, contrary to any of the statutes or laws described in section 1601, and the seizure may be made without a warrant. A common carrier is not responsible for damages or otherwise to any owner, shipper, or consignee by reason of any such seizure. When a complaint is made on oath to any magistrate authorized to issue warrants in criminal cases that any wild birds, wild animals, or fish, any part or parts of wild birds, wild animals, or fish, or any nets, hunting or fishing apparatuses or appliances, or other property have been or are being killed, taken, caught, had in possession or under control, or shipped, contrary to the statutes or laws described in section 1601, and that the complainant believes the property to be stored, kept, or concealed in any particular house or place, the magistrate, if he or she is satisfied that there is probable cause for the belief, shall issue a warrant to search for the property. The warrant shall be directed to the department, or an officer appointed by the department, or to any other peace officer. All wild birds, wild animals, fish, nets, boats, fishing or hunting appliances or apparatuses, or automobiles or other property of any kind seized by an officer shall be turned over to the department to be held by the department subject to the order of the court as provided in this part.

(2) For the purposes of this part, "probable cause" or "probable cause to believe" is present on the part of a peace officer if there are facts that would induce any fair-minded person of average intelligence and judgment to believe that a law or statute had been violated or was being violated contrary to any of the statutes or laws described in section 1601.

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