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BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

Lansing, Michigan 48909

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Senate Bill 694 (as reported with amendments)

Sponsor: Senator George Z. Hart

Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 2-12-90

RATIONALE

Public Act 230 of 1925 authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to make an order suspending or abridging the open season on any fish, game or fur-bearing animal, or game bird if the species is in danger of depletion or extermination. When the Commission issues such as order, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to publish the order between 21 and 60 days prior to its effective date and at least once annually while the order is in effect. Publication must be in at least one newspaper in each county affected by the order. Since the orders sometimes are lengthy and can be required to be published in several newspapers, apparently it can be quite expensive to comply with the public notice requirement. Some people feel that, since hunters and anglers receive annual printed DNR guides when they purchase their hunting and/or fishing licenses, the DNR should be allowed to meet the public notice requirement for ordered changes in open season restrictions by printing the Commission orders in those guides.

CONTENT

The bill would amend Public Act 230 of 1925 to allow notice of an order suspending or abridging an open season to be published in the annual hunting, fishing, and trapping guides available from field offices and licensed agents of the Department of Natural Resources. Providing this notice would be an alternative to satisfying the current requirement that the

DNR give notice by publishing the order between 21 and 60 days before the order's effective date and at least once annually while the order remains in force in at least one newspaper in each county in which the order applies.

The bill also would require the DNR to publish annual notice of the availability of the annual sports fishing handbook. The notice would have to be published in one or more Michigan newspapers of general circulation, and inform the public of where, when, and how the handbook can be obtained. In addition, the DNR would have to notify the public of any change to the handbook in the same manner as it currently is required to give notice of orders changing hunting or fishing season restrictions.

MCL 300.3

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of Natural Resources estimates that this bill would result in cost savings of approximately \$250,000 to State government annually.

ARGUMENTS**Supporting Argument**

By allowing the DNR to give public notice of changes in hunting and fishing season restrictions by printing the orders for those changes in the annual guides, the DNR could save significant amounts of money currently

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spent on publishing such changes in newspapers throughout the State. In addition, notifying hunters and anglers through the DNR guides would be more efficient than providing notice in newspapers, since the DNR's licensed agents give the guides to purchasers of licenses. Further, since some anglers and hunters hold lifetime licenses and do not purchase annual licenses, it is important that the DNR publish a notice of the availability of the annual hunting and fishing guides.

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