

SFA

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

• Lansing, Michigan 48909

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House Bill 4992 (Substitute H-1 as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Representative Jerry C. Bartnik
House Committee: Tourism, Fisheries, and Wildlife
Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs

Date Completed: 11-6-89

RATIONALE

The Game and Fish Protection Fund is the primary source of funding for the State's hunting and fishing programs, including enforcement of game and fish laws and related support services, educational services, and administrative costs. In recent years, the Fund has been plagued with budgetary problems, and Public Act 94 of 1988 created the Game and Fish Lifetime License Trust Fund to establish a long-term revenue source for the Game and Fish Protection Fund. Public Act 94 created several lifetime licenses including a lifetime sportspersons license that includes privileges for taking small game, all fish (including trout and salmon), and deer (both with firearm and bow and arrow) at a cost of \$1,000. Some hunters have expressed concern that privileges for bear, waterfowl, and fur harvesting are not included under the lifetime sportspersons license. Some feel that an additional lifetime license that would incorporate all of those hunting and fishing privileges should be made available.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Game and Fish Lifetime License Trust Fund to establish a comprehensive lifetime hunting and fishing license that would add bear, waterfowl, and fur harvesting privileges to the existing privileges included under the lifetime sportsperson license (firearm deer, small game, fish, archery deer, and trout and salmon stamp). The fee for the comprehensive lifetime license would be \$1,025

and a person who already held a lifetime sportsperson license (which carries a fee of \$1,000) could purchase a comprehensive lifetime license for \$25. A seller of a comprehensive lifetime license could retain \$15 from the sale, as is currently allowed for the sale of a lifetime sportsperson license. In addition, the bill specifies that a lifetime license issued under the Act would not guarantee the licensee the right to take game except in compliance with Natural Resources Commission regulations and license and permit conditions.

Beginning March 1, 1990, and for each subsequent year, the Act requires the State Treasurer to credit to the Game and Fish Protection Fund from the Game and Fish Lifetime License Trust Fund an amount that the Department of Natural Resources would have received had the holder of a lifetime sportsperson license purchased the equivalent annual license during that year. The bill specifies that, for a comprehensive lifetime license, the equivalent annual license for purposes of that calculation would be the annual sportsperson license.

MCL 316.1003, 316.1004, and 316.1006

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill could reduce net annual revenue to the Game and Fish Protection Fund from between \$400 and \$45,000. The lower estimate is based on historic purchases of bear, waterfowl and/or

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fur harvester's licenses by current lifetime sportsperson licensees. The higher estimate assumes that all current lifetime sportsperson licensees would have separately purchased the three additional licenses and instead purchased the comprehensive license.

ARGUMENTS

Supporting Argument

Consolidating all of the licenses and stamps into one license and one purchase would provide greater convenience for individuals who hunt bear, waterfowl, and fur-bearing animals. In addition, it seems reasonable that these hunting privileges be included in a lifetime license, since all other popular hunting and fishing privileges are covered by a lifetime license. Further, although the bill is expected to reduce nominally the annual revenue from the sales of bear, waterfowl stamp, and fur harvester licenses, it is unlikely that very many buyers of the comprehensive license would have purchased all three licenses every year.

Opposing Argument

Although the addition of resident bear, waterfowl stamp, and fur harvester privileges to the lifetime sportspersons license is laudable, some provision should be made for those lifetime license holders who have already purchased their bear license for the 1989 season. Those licensees should not have to pay the full \$25, since they already have paid \$14.35 for a bear license.

Opposing Argument

The Hunting and Fishing License Act was amended by Public Act 63 of 1986 to specify that fees collected for waterfowl stamps would be used for the acquisition of wetlands. The bill does not provide, however, that money that would have been received from the sale of waterfowl stamps under the comprehensive lifetime licenses be used for the purchase of wetlands. The bill would effectively decrease the amount of money available for the purchase of wetlands.

Opposing Argument

The bill would allow a seller of a comprehensive lifetime license to retain \$15 from the license fee, regardless of whether the buyer paid \$1,025, for the complete license, or \$25, for the addition to a lifetime sportspersons

license. Thus, sellers could sell people the two separate licenses, rather than just the comprehensive license, and retain \$30 rather than \$15.

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