

# Legislative Analysis

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## USE OF DRONES IN HUNTING & FISHING: PROHIBIT CERTAIN ACTIVITIES

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**Senate Bill 926 (Substitute H-2)**  
**Sponsor: Sen. Tom Casperson**

**Senate Bill 927 (Substitute S-1)**  
**Sponsor: Sen. Phil Pavlov**

**House Committee: Natural Resources**  
**Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism**

**Complete to 12-3-14**

## A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILLS 926 & 927 AS REPORTED BY HOUSE COMMITTEE

Senate Bills 926 and 927 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to (1) prohibit an individual from using an unmanned aerial vehicle or an unmanned submersible vehicle to interfere with or harass another individual who is engaged in the process of lawfully taking an animal, and (2) prohibit an individual from taking game or fish using a UAV or USV.

Senate Bill 926 would define *unmanned aerial vehicle* (UAV) as an unmanned vehicle or device that uses aerodynamic forces to achieve flight. Also defined is *unmanned submersible vehicle* (USV), which means an unmanned vehicle or device that operates on the surface of water or underwater. The bill would prohibit an individual from using a UAV or USV to interfere with or harass another individual who is engaged in the process of lawfully taking an animal or fish.

The penalty for violating this provision is already contained in the law. A violator would be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days and/or a fine of not less than \$500, plus the costs of prosecution. Subsequent violations are misdemeanors punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year and/or a fine of not less than \$1,000 or more than \$2,500, plus the costs of prosecution.

The bill also would modify language specifying that the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) has the exclusive authority to regulate sport fishing in Michigan. The statute currently states that the NRC has exclusive authority to regulate the taking of fish in this state.

Senate Bill 927 would prohibit an individual from taking game using a UAV.

The two bills are tie-barred, meaning that neither can take effect unless both are enacted.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The bill adds a new misdemeanor. Misdemeanor convictions would increase costs related to county jails and/or local misdemeanor probation supervision. The costs of local incarceration in a county jail and local misdemeanor probation supervision vary by jurisdiction. Misdemeanor fines go to public libraries. Otherwise, Senate Bills 926 and 927 would have no fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources or local governments.

**POSITIONS:**

The following indicated support for the bill on 12-2-14:

Department of Natural Resources (12-2-14)  
Michigan United Conservation Clubs (12-2-14)  
Michigan B.A.S.S. Nation (12-2-14)

Legislative Analyst: Josh Roesner  
Fiscal Analyst: Austin Scott

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.