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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 635 (as introduced 12-3-15)
Sponsor: Senator Tom Casperson
Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Date Completed: 3-2-16

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:

- **Allow a qualified nonresident to purchase various hunting and fishing licenses at 50% of the cost of nonresident licenses.**
- **Provide for a combination deer license, which could be purchased only by an individual holding a valid base license.**
- **Specify that a combination deer license would include an unrestricted tag to take any antlered deer during any season and a restricted tag that could be used to take any deer having at least three points.**
- **Allow the Department of Natural Resources to issue a kill tag with each combination deer license.**

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

Base License, Qualified Nonresident

Except as otherwise provided in Part 435, an individual is prohibited from hunting small game, unless he or she possesses a current base license. A base license authorizes the individual to hunt for small game, except for animals or birds that require a special license. The fee for a base license is as follows:

- For a resident: \$10
- For a resident minor child or nonresident minor child: \$5.
- For a nonresident: \$150.

Under the bill, the base license fee would be \$75 for a qualified nonresident. "Qualified nonresident" would mean either of the following: a) a nonresident who owns land in this State; or b) a nonresident who signs an affidavit that includes both of the following: a statement that the individual previously lived in this State for 10 consecutive years, and the name of a sponsoring individual who will accompany that nonresident while hunting. To qualify as a sponsoring individual, a person would have to be the nonresident's spouse, parent, stepparent, grandparent, brother, stepbrother, sister, stepsister, son, stepson, daughter, or stepdaughter, be a resident of this State, and have a valid hunting license.

A nonresident may purchase a limited nonresident small game license entitling him or her to hunt for a seven-day period all species of small game that are available to hunt under a nonresident base license. The fee for a limited nonresident small game license is \$80. Under the bill, for a qualified nonresident, the fee would be \$40.

Qualified Nonresident Combination Hunt & Fish License

The fee for a nonresident combination hunt and fish license is \$265, and includes all of the privileges conferred by the following: a) nonresident base license, b) two deer licenses, and c) all-species fishing license. Under the bill, for a qualified nonresident, the fee for a nonresident combination license hunt and fish license would be \$132.50, and would include the same privileges.

Fishing License

An all-species fishing license entitles the licensee to take and possess all aquatic species. An individual 17 years old or older is prohibited from taking or possessing an aquatic species, except aquatic insects, without a license. The fee for a resident all-species fishing license is \$25, and the fee for a nonresident all-species fishing license is \$75. Under the bill, for a qualified nonresident, the fee for a nonresident all-species fishing license would be \$37.50.

Qualified Nonresident Deer License

Only an individual holding a valid base license is eligible to purchase a deer or antlerless deer license. The fee for a deer or antlerless deer license is \$20. The Act allows a resident, where authorized by the Department of Natural Resources, to purchase a second deer license for the fee for which the individual is eligible. Where authorized, a nonresident may purchase an additional deer license or antlerless deer license for \$170. The bill would allow a qualified nonresident to purchase an additional deer license or antlerless deer license for \$85.

Wolf Hunting License

The Act prohibits an individual from hunting wolf without a wolf hunting license, and only an individual holding a valid base license is eligible to purchase a wolf hunting license. The fee for a resident wolf hunting license is \$100, and for a nonresident wolf hunting license the fee is \$500. Under the bill, for a qualified nonresident, the fee for a nonresident wolf hunting license would be \$250.

Combination Deer License

Under the bill, only an individual holding a valid base license would be eligible to purchase a combination deer license. The fee for a combination deer license would be \$40, and would include the following:

- An unrestricted tag that could be used to take any antlered deer during any season or antlerless deer during archery season.
- A restricted tag that could be used to take any deer having at least three antler points on one side, each at least one inch in length.

The Department could issue a kill tag with or as part of each combination deer license. The kill tag would have to bear the license number, and also could include space for other pertinent information required by the Department. The kill tag, if issued, would be part of the license.

"Antlered deer" would mean a deer having at least one antler that extends three inches or more above the skull.

MCL 324.43504 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Jeff Mann

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have a significant negative fiscal impact on the Game and Fish Protection Fund used by the Department of Natural Resources, and no fiscal impact on local units of government. Under the bill, certain nonresidents would be able to pay half-price for nonresident hunting and fishing licenses, other than the combination deer license. Because there are no data regarding how many nonresidents could be eligible for qualified nonresident status, a reliable estimate for the amount of potential revenue lost under the bill is unavailable. However, it is possible to provide an estimate of revenue loss from a highest-case scenario using license sales data from fiscal year 2014-15. Table 1 provides detail on this estimate, assuming that 100% of nonresidents qualified, which is the upper and probably unlikely bound of what the revenue loss would be. The Department has estimated that the bill would result in a revenue loss of \$1.0 million to \$4.0 million, depending on the number of qualifying nonresidents, which is a reasonable estimate range. It also should be noted that the bill would extend the qualified nonresident license discount to wolf hunting licenses, at a discount of \$250; however, there has not been a wolf hunt since 2014. All lost revenue would come from the Game and Fish Protection Fund, which in FY 2014-15 generated a total of \$75.5 million.

The bill also would create in statute a deer combination license, which the Department currently offers to residents for \$40 and nonresidents for \$190. The bill would make this license available to everyone for \$40, regardless of resident, nonresident, or qualified nonresident status. In terms of revenue lost, then, the figure in the table should be accurate regardless of the percentage of nonresidents who would qualify.

Table 1

Nonresident License Type	FY 2014-15 Sales	Discount	Revenue Loss - 100% Qualified
Base	17,959	\$75.00	\$1,212,232.50
7-Day Small Game	3,422	\$40.00	\$123,192.00
Hunt/Fish	3,005	\$132.50	\$358,346.25
Add'l Antlerless Deer	31	\$85.00	\$2,371.50
Deer Combo	664	\$150.00	\$89,640.00
All-Species Fish	66,167	\$29.50	\$1,951,926.50
TOTAL	91,248	---	\$4,184,255.25

Fiscal Analyst: Josh Sefton

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.