

RECREATION PASSPORT EXEMPTIONS

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bills 4672 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Donni Steele

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

House Bills 4673 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Greg Markkanen

House Bills 4743 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Jason Woolford

Committee: Natural Resources and Outdoor Tourism
Complete to 8-20-25

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4672 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to exempt individuals with the *gold star family* license plate (as described in section 803e of the Michigan Vehicle Code) from needing a recreation passport to enter a state park, and to specify that individuals do not need a recreation passport when going to state-operated public boating access site on a designated free fishing day or free winter fishing day.

A *gold star family member* is defined in section 803e of the Michigan Vehicle Code as a person who has had an immediate family member die while serving in the United States Armed Forces or in forces incorporated as part of the United States Armed Forces if the immediate family member meets any of the eligibility criteria in 10 USC 1126(a)(1) to (3)¹ for a gold star lapel button.

MCL 324.74116 and 324.78119

House Bill 4673 would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to provide that gold star families with the license plate issued under section 803e do not need to make an annual selection regarding purchasing the recreation passport at the time their vehicle registration is renewed, as they would already be allowed entrance to a state park by virtue of having the special gold star family member license plate.

MCL 257.805

House Bill 4743 would amend NREPA to add an exemption allowing an honorably discharged military veteran to enter a state park without first purchasing a recreation passport. For this exemption to apply, a veteran must request an identifying hangtag, sticker, or other form of identification from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and display that identifying marker on their vehicle prior to entering the state park.

MCL 324.74116

¹ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/1126>

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bills 4672, 4673, and 4743 are likely to reduce revenue for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by expanding exemptions to the Recreation Passport requirement for state park facilities. Gold Star Family license plate owners and honorably discharged military personnel are not exempted from the Recreation Passport requirement at present. The Department of State (DOS) has confirmed 717 active Gold Star Family registrations, which would represent a revenue loss of approximately \$10,000. The present number of Recreation Passports sold to honorably discharged military veterans is unclear. Consequently, the total potential lost revenue resulting from these bills is uncertain. The sale of Recreation Passports generated \$43.2 million in revenue for FY 2023-24. This revenue is received by both DOS and DNR, where it supports state park operations, maintenance, capital outlay projects, local public recreation, and forest recreation. The bills are unlikely to affect departmental costs or local government costs or revenues.

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