
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 1079

Brief Description: Merging fishing and hunting license fees for certain veterans and persons with disabilities.

Sponsors: Representatives Kretz, Blake, Upthegrove, Ormsby, O'Brien, Morrell, Conway, Haigh, Moeller, McCune and Simpson; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a new definition for "person with a disability" in the Fish and Wildlife Code.
- Changes references in the Fish and Wildlife Code to language that meets respectful language requirements.
- Removes the requirement that a military veteran with a service-related disability must be honorably discharged in order to receive a reduced license rate from the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Hearing Date: 1/15/07

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Persons with disabilities and the Department of Fish and Wildlife

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) offers reduced license fees and additional hunting opportunities to persons with a disability. For instance, the Department offers special permits to hunters with a disability and permits hunters with a disability to hunt in manners unlawful for a person without a disability [RCW 77.32.327 & 238].

Reduced rate \$5 fishing licenses are available to persons with developmental disabilities, people who are blind, and honorably discharged armed services veterans with a disability arising from

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military service [RCW 77.32.490]. Reduced rate hunting licenses are available only to honorably discharged armed forces veterans with a service-related disability [RCW 77.32.480].

The Department also offers a designated harvester card [RCW 77.32.400]. This card allows a person with a disability to have another person that is with him or her to physically harvest fish or shellfish for the person with the disability. The person with a disability is required to also have the appropriate fishing licenses and any fish or shellfish harvested by the designated harvester counts against the bag limit of the person with the disability.

For the Department's purposes, a person is considered disabled if he or she has a permanent condition that requires the use of a wheelchair, crutches, or similar device [RCW 77.08.010(27)]. However, some of the reduced licence fees and increased opportunities also apply to individuals that satisfy various other standards for ascertaining a disability.

"People first" requirements

The Office of the Code Revisor (CRO) is directed to avoid and change language in the Revised Code of Washington that is not respectful to people with disabilities [RCW 44.04.280]. This includes identifying the individual as a person prior to identifying the disability. For instance, the CRO is directed to use the terminology "individuals with mental retardation" instead of "mentally retarded" and "individual with a handicap" instead of "handicapped" or "cripple".

Summary of Bill:

Definition of "person with a disability"

An individual can meet the definition of a "person with a disability" for the Department's purposes if he or she satisfies one of three conditions. The defined conditions include ambulatory difficulty, difficult handling or operating hunting or fishing equipment, and visual impairments.

"People first" changes

Terminology changes are made in the Fish and Wildlife Code that conform with the respectful language requirements placed on the CRO. The terms "disabled person" and "person of disability" is replaced with "person with a disability".

Licensure changes

The authorization to provide reduced hunting and fishing licenses for individuals with disabilities is consolidated from two separate sections into one section. In addition, the requirement that a military veteran with a service-related disability be honorably discharged in order to receive the reduced license rate is removed.

Other than the removal of the honorable discharge requirements, the restrictions on who does and who does not qualify for a reduced rate hunting or fishing license remains generally unchanged. A person meeting the definition of "person with a disability" does not necessarily qualify for a reduced rate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.