

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6181

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As of February 15, 2018

**Title:** An act relating to establishing a donation program for resident disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a donation program for resident disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses.

**Sponsors:** Senators Bailey, Palumbo, O'Ban, Hobbs, McCoy, Chase, Sheldon, Zeiger and Wagoner.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 1/22/18.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Permits the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to accept public donations to be applied towards qualified disabled veteran hunting and fishing license purchases.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

**Staff:** Angela Kleis (786-7469)

**Background:** DFW. DFW is authorized to regulate state fish and wildlife resources and to issue licenses for fishing and hunting activities. License types vary by activity and rates are on a tiered fee schedule based on categories including resident, youth, senior, and non-resident.

Disabled Veteran Licenses. An honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces may apply for reduced rate combination fishing and hunting licenses. Fishing and hunting license rates for disabled veterans are as follows:

- combination fishing licenses are issued at a reduced rate of \$5; and
- all hunting licenses are issued at the reduced rate of a youth hunting license fee.

To qualify for the reduced rate, applicants must be:

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- a resident 65 years of age or older who has a service-connected disability; or
- a resident with a 30 percent or more service-connected disability.

Non-resident verified disabled veterans are eligible for a combination fishing license or any hunting license at the same rate as nondisabled residents for the same license.

**Summary of Bill:** A donation program for resident disabled veterans to receive hunting and fishing licenses is established. DFW may accept public donations so that resident disabled veterans on a first-come, first-served basis, may elect to utilize a donation toward their purchase of hunting and fishing licenses. DFW must adopt rules to implement the program and to define the license products available for purchase using donated funds.

The DFW director may take other actions consistent with facilitating hunting and fishing opportunities for disabled veterans, including entering into agreements with willing landowners.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This bill would be a great benefit for our disabled veterans to provide them with hunting and fishing licenses at a reduced rate. There are people who would be willing to donate to make that possible for our veterans. This bill establishes a program that would allow the state to accept these donations and then issue a hunting or fishing license to our disabled veterans when they apply for one at no cost. The outdoor experience is therapeutic to disabled veterans. Anything that can be done to get disabled veterans out in the woods or on the water is a good thing. This bill is a way to honor our disabled veterans. This bill creates a disabled veterans license program implemented by DFW and allows for the public to generously donate towards hunting and fishing licenses for disabled veterans. This bill will give these veterans the opportunity to be outside and connect with their fellow hunters or fishermen.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Barbara Bailey, Prime Sponsor; Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Josh Dugan, Snohomish County; Shelly Helder, Snohomish County; Evan Yett, DFW.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.