

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6198

As of January 23, 2018

Title: An act relating to increasing participation in recreational fishing and hunting.

Brief Description: Increasing participation in recreational fishing and hunting.

Sponsors: Senators Takko, Wilson, Rolfes, Rivers and Mullet; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

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

Brief Summary of Bill

- Raises the minimum age requirement for fishing licenses from 15 to 16 years of age.
- Eliminates the restriction on the use of a temporary combination license on opening day of the lowland lake fishing season.
- Creates a one-time hunting license discount for first-time resident hunters who have completed a hunter education program.
- Authorizes the creation and sale of a multi-year combination license at a fee lower than the combined cost of the licenses.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Angela Kleis (786-7469)

Background: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). DFW, the DFW director, and the DFW Commission (Commission) are authorized to regulate state fish and wildlife resources and to issue licenses for fishing and hunting activities.

Licenses. *Youth.* Currently, youth is defined as a person 15 years of age for fishing and under 16 years of age for hunting. The minimum age requirement for a fishing license is 15 years of age.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Combination. The Commission has the authority to create and sell annual combination licenses for all hunting and fishing activities at or below a fee equal to the total cost of the individual license contained within any combination.

Temporary. A temporary fishing license, which is valid for up to three days, permits the holder to fish or possess fish, shellfish, and seaweed taken from state or offshore waters. This license, except for active duty military personnel, is currently not valid on game fish species for an eight consecutive day period beginning on the opening day of the lowland lake fishing season.

Hunter Education and Licensure. The DFW-managed hunter education program provides training in the safe handling of firearms, conservation, and sportsmanship. The following people must complete a hunter education program in order to purchase a hunting license:

- persons under 18 years of age; or
- persons who were born after January 1, 1972, that are purchasing a hunting license for the first time.

Summary of Bill: The minimum age requirement for a fishing license is increased from 15 to 16 years of age.

The Commission is authorized to:

- offer a one-time hunting license discount of up to \$20 to first-time resident hunters who completed a hunter education program; and
- create and sell multi-year combination licenses for all hunting and fishing activities at or below a fee equal to the total cost of the individual license contained within any combination.

The restriction on the use of a temporary combination fishing licenses on game species on the opening day of lowland lake fishing is removed.

The director may offer temporary discount promotional pricing.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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 makes it easier for a family to go hunting together. Family memories can come from the experience of hunting together and the experience can bring families closer together. The numbers of folks hunting and fishing is declining throughout the country and one of the reasons is the cost to go hunting or fishing. This bill makes some reasonable accommodations to the costs so that families can buy licenses for their family and share these experiences as a family. This bill will recruit more people to participate in these activities and enjoy the great outdoors. This bill reduces barriers to hunting and fishing and aligns the youth age for hunting and fishing to 16 years of

age. The bill provides a discount to hunter education graduates for their first license. The bill allows DFW to bundle and offer family packages or offer discount promotional pricing.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dean Takko, Prime Sponsor; Tom Echols, Hunters Heritage Council; Nate Pamplin, DFW.

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