

**HB 2493 - DIGEST**

Finds that enforcement of the state's fish and game laws is an essential component to professional wildlife management. There are instances when a violation of the state's hunting laws occurs not due to an intentional attempt to increase one's success in the field, but due to honest confusion about the rules or understandable mistakes made in the pursuit of game. Enforcement officers of the department of fish and wildlife have no option but to cite these well-meaning citizens with a criminal infraction.

Declares an intent to provide the field enforcement of the department of fish and wildlife with additional enforcement tools, other than criminal sanctions, to properly handle situations where well-meaning and otherwise law-abiding hunters mistakenly, and with no intent to violate a hunting law, find themselves in violation of the fish and wildlife enforcement code.

Provides that if mitigating circumstances exist, the responding fish and wildlife officer may, as an alternative to citing an individual for a criminal violation, instead issue a noncriminal natural resource infraction. The discretion to issue either a noncriminal natural resource infraction or a criminal citation belongs to the responding fish and wildlife officer and is based on examples of appropriate mitigating circumstances identified by the state fish and wildlife commission or the individual circumstances of the situation being investigated.

Declares that the penalty for a noncriminal natural resource infraction is one hundred fifty dollars.