

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1351

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources
General Government & Information Technology

Title: An act relating to license fees for national guard members under Title 77 RCW.

Brief Description: Concerning license fees for national guard members under Title 77 RCW.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Harris, DeBolt and Stanford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 1/27/15, 2/4/15 [DPS];

General Government & Information Technology: 2/8/16 [DPS(AGNR-A GGIT)].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue three types of recreational hunting licenses to resident full-time members of the Washington State Guard and National Guard at no charge.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Dunshee, Hurst, Lytton, Orcutt, Pettigrew, Schmick, Stanford and Van De Wege.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Dent, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Peter Clodfelter (786-7127).

Background:

Introduction to Fishing and Hunting Licenses.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for issuing hunting and fishing licenses at fees that are set in statute for each license type. These fees generally

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are a set amount for an adult state resident, an elevated rate for a non-state resident, and a reduced rate for a youth participant. Reduced rate licenses are also available to individuals with certain disabilities and certain veterans.

Reduced Rate Licenses.

Residents. To qualify for a reduced rate license (the fee set for a youth license), a Washington resident must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- be an honorably discharged veteran who is at least 65 years old and who has a service-related disability of any kind;
- be an honorably discharged veteran of any age who has a 30 percent or greater service-related disability; or
- have, regardless of military service, a developmental disability, or a disability that results in the permanent use of a wheelchair, blindness, or another visual impairment.

Non-Residents. To qualify for a reduced rate license (the fee set for a resident license), a non-Washington resident must be an honorably discharged veteran who is either 65 years old with a service-related disability or who has a 30 percent or greater service-related disability of any kind. Additionally, active duty military personnel serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces qualify for a combination fishing license at the fee set for a resident license.

Types of Licenses.

Various licenses, permits, and tags are required to fish or hunt for specific types of fish and wildlife and at specific times of the year. The following are types of recreational fishing and hunting licenses that the WDFW issues:

- small game hunting license;
- supplemental migratory bird permit;
- big game hunting license;
- special hunting season permit (fee to enter drawing to receive a permit);
- disabled hunter permit;
- primary turkey tag and additional turkey tags;
- western Washington pheasant permit;
- personal use fishing license (freshwater, saltwater, or combination license);
- group fishing permit;
- shellfish and seaweed license;
- razor clam license; and
- scientific permit.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Upon verification of qualification, the WDFW must issue to a Washington resident member of the Washington State Guard (WSG) or National Guard the recreational hunting licenses at no cost to the Washington resident member of the WSG or National Guard:

- a small game hunting license;
- a supplemental migratory bird permit; and
- a big game hunting license.

To qualify, the Washington resident member of the WSG or National Guard must be either: (1) an active full-time employee of the WSG or National Guard; or (2) a WSG or National Guard member whose status requires the State Guard or National Guard member to participate in drill training on a part-time basis.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The WDFW must also issue the three types of recreational hunting licenses to resident members of the WSG. Also, a resident member of the WSG or the National Guard must be either a full-time employee or participate in drill training on a part-time basis, but such drill training does not have to be for pay or retirement points.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is a powerful statement that recognizes the service of National Guard members. Other states have hunting benefits for members of the National Guard, as well as other benefits like tuition credits and reduced vehicle licensing costs. In Washington, there are not benefits for members of the National Guard like those in other states. Additionally, the bill would help with the retention of National Guard members. However, WSG members should be included in the bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Dan Dent, Washington Army National Guard.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources be substituted therefor and the substitute bill as amended by Committee on General Government & Information Technology do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Hudgins, Chair; Kuderer, Vice Chair; MacEwen, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Johnson, Morris and Senn.

Staff: Dan Jones (786-7118).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On General Government & Information Technology Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Agriculture & Natural Resources:

The substitute bill limits the eligibility to receive certain hunting licenses at no cost to only full-time employees of the Washington National Guard or State Guard, rather than both full-time employees and members who drill on a part-time basis. The substitute bill also makes the effective date contingent on the Department of Fish and Wildlife updating the WILD system, which is used to sell hunting licenses, and providing notice of the effective date by June 30, 2017.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on the date that the Department of Fish and Wildlife updates the WILD system, but not sooner than 90 days after the end of the legislative session in which it was enacted.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill would add Washington to the more than 15 other states that provide state incentives to those serving in the National Guard. High turnover in the National Guard is costly, and this bill would have a meaningful impact on recruitment and retention. The bill would allow the National Guard to offer something that other public safety organizations cannot. The incentives provided in this bill would recognize the service that National Guard members provide in this state and overseas, as well as the time members spend away from loved ones.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Daniel Dent and Matthew Ivy, National Guard Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.