

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2010 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 876 (Delegate Weir)
Environmental Matters

Department of Natural Resources - Deer Hunting Licenses and Permits -
Crossbow

This bill prohibits the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from requiring individuals with a DNR-issued deer hunting license or permit for bow and arrow hunting to obtain a separate deer hunting license or permit for crossbow hunting during the same season.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: The bill does not materially affect local operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Generally, fishing or hunting licenses must be obtained from DNR, or an authorized agent of DNR, in order to fish or hunt in Maryland and its waters. DNR offers numerous types of hunting licenses that authorize hunting during different time periods, for specific animal species, and within specific geographic locations. Among others, the hunting licenses DNR offers include the:

- full season resident (age 16 to 64) hunting license, which costs \$24.50 and authorizes hunting of all legal game birds and mammals in season without the need for additional stamps, excluding deer bow and muzzleloader season, migratory game birds, and furbearers;

- the resident bow and arrow stamp, which costs \$6 and authorizes deer hunting during bow and arrow season; and
- the crossbow permit, which does not have a cost and authorizes a person to use a crossbow – for all game legal for a vertical bow – if the person cannot operate a traditional bow due to a physical disability and possesses a valid hunting license.

To hunt for deer with either a traditional bow or crossbow during the bow hunting season, a hunter must have a full season hunting license and a bow and arrow stamp. If an individual has a hunting license and a bow and arrow stamp, DNR does not require a separate license, stamp, or permit to hunt with a crossbow.

Crossbows may be used to hunt only deer, bear, and turkey. Currently, crossbows may be used to hunt throughout the State during segments of the bow hunting season (*e.g.*, October 1-15 and January 15-30). In addition, crossbows may be used to hunt during the entire bow hunting season in DNR's suburban deer archery zone which includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. Recently, DNR proposed new hunting and trapping regulations that would, among other things, allow crossbow hunting during the entire bow hunting season.

DNR advises that the bill prohibits the issuance of crossbow permits to hunters with disabilities. While the number of crossbow permits for hunters with disabilities is not tracked, DNR estimates that approximately 950 are issued annually.

Small Business Effect: Preventing disabled hunters from using crossbows during bow season may decrease small business income. According to DNR, it is estimated that more than \$100 million was spent by deer hunters in the State on food, lodging, equipment, and transportation in 2006. In addition to businesses affected by hunting, the bill may also affect several other types of businesses. Most farms, for example, are small businesses. DNR indicates that a 2008 survey of farmers estimated that deer caused nearly \$7.7 million in agricultural damage in Maryland (equating to \$33.50 for each deer in the population at that time). To the extent that the bill allows additional crop damage by deer, farmer income decreases. The bill may also affect vehicle owners and businesses involved in the repair of vehicles. DNR estimates that the total number of deer-vehicle collisions each year is between 20,000 and 30,000, with each collision resulting in an average of \$2,600 to \$2,800 in damage. Property owners and businesses may also be affected to the extent that the bill results in damage to ornamental shrubs and gardens.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

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mpc/lgc

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