

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2010 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

Senate Bill 987

(Senator Astle)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environmental Matters

**Natural Resources - Conservation Law Enforcement Act of 2010**

This bill clarifies and expands Department of Natural Resources (DNR) law enforcement responsibilities and authority, establishes a new commemorative lifetime hunting license, and requires a report.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2010.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$40,000 in FY 2011 to produce and air DNR law enforcement program segments for television. Special fund revenues may increase in FY 2011 and future years due to contributions from nonprofit organizations and commemorative lifetime hunting license sales.

(in dollars)	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
SF Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
GF Expenditure	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Effect	(\$40,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The bill establishes in statute that DNR's Natural Resources Police (NRP) has statewide authority to enforce conservation, boating, and criminal laws and

(1) provides maritime and rural search and rescue services; (2) provides public education in hunting, boating, and water safety; (3) provides primary law enforcement services for State parks, State forests, wildlife management areas, and public lands owned and managed by DNR; and (4) serves as the lead agency for maritime homeland security on State waterways.

### *Commemorative Lifetime Hunting License*

The bill establishes a commemorative lifetime hunting license. DNR is required to issue a limited number of such licenses to nonprofit organizations until December 31, 2011. Nonprofit organizations that receive commemorative lifetime hunting licenses may, in cooperation with DNR, market and sell the licenses. Proceeds from commemorative lifetime hunting licenses must be allocated to NRP for conservation law enforcement. DNR is authorized to adopt associated implementing regulations.

### *Law Enforcement Reports*

DNR is encouraged to conduct a study that identifies statutory recommendations for improving NRP's effectiveness and efficiency and addresses the use of technology for the prevention and detection of violations. DNR must submit a report by December 1, 2010, providing any findings and recommendations to specified committees of the General Assembly.

DNR is required to study funding policies that may bolster the ranks of NRP in order to help meet law enforcement demands, including policies for leveraging additional revenues from public and private sources. DNR must submit a report by October 1, 2011, providing findings and recommendations to specified committees of the General Assembly.

The bill authorizes specified DNR reports to (1) include recommendations for statutory and budgetary proposals to promote public awareness of the benefits of conserving fisheries and wildlife in the State and to reduce the incidence of violations of State conservation laws; and (2) be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.

### *Other*

The Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission (MPBC) is encouraged to promote public recognition of and appreciation for the role of NRP in enforcing State conservation laws. The Governor is encouraged to increase public awareness of and reliance on NRP reserve officers. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is encouraged to distribute funds it receives from the U.S. Department of Justice as fines or penalties

resulting from federal convictions of game violations in the State to DNR for conservation law enforcement.

**Current Law:** 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. For example, the full season resident (age 16 to 64) hunting license 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.

**Background:** NRP serves as a public safety agency with statewide authority to enforce all natural resources and conservation laws and regulations relating to seafood harvesting and sport fishing, boating, waterways pollution, wildlife conservation, and enforcement activities in State parks, forests, and other public lands. In addition, NRP is responsible for maritime and rural search and rescue and is the lead agency for maritime homeland security on State waterways. NRP also provides public education in the areas of hunting, boating, and water safety. Each NRP officer has full law enforcement powers statewide.

NFWF is a nonprofit organization that was established by the U.S. Congress to work with federal and nonfederal partners to further the conservation and management of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources of the United States. NFWF's Impact-Directed Environmental Account program receives, manages, and disburses funds that typically originate from court orders, legal settlements, regulatory permits, licenses, and restoration and mitigation plans. Through the program, NFWF acts as a neutral third-party fiduciary to manage funds for the benefit of government and private-sector stakeholders.

### **State Fiscal Effect:**

#### *Department of Natural Resources*

The bill establishes a commemorative lifetime hunting license and requires DNR to issue a limited number of the licenses to nonprofit organizations until December 31, 2011. To the extent nonprofit organizations market and sell the licenses, as authorized by the bill, DNR special fund revenues increase in fiscal 2011 and 2012. Because the bill authorizes only a limited number of commemorative lifetime hunting licenses to be issued, this estimate assumes overall hunting license sales are not materially affected. DNR special fund revenues increase further in fiscal 2011 and future years to the extent NFWF allocates fine or penalty funds to DNR for conservation law enforcement.

This estimate assumes that DNR can absorb any costs associated with (1) issuing the commemorative lifetime hunting licenses in fiscal 2011 and 2012; and (2) completing the

two reports mentioned in the bill. However, limited staff resources will be diverted from other responsibilities to complete the reports. It also assumes that if the bill's authority regarding electronic monitoring systems is used, watermen, and not DNR, would purchase and install the systems.

*Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission*

The bill encourages MPBC to promote public recognition of and appreciation for NRP. MPBC advises that \$40,000 is required in fiscal 2011 to develop several segments on NRP for an episode of the Outdoors Maryland television show. Outdoors Maryland, one of Maryland Public Television's most popular local programs, depicts the region's diverse collection of ecosystems, people, and places. This estimate includes costs associated with conducting interviews, producing video segments, and airing the shows.

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**Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of State Police, Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 22, 2010  
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