

Legislative Analysis



WILD TURKEY LICENSE FEE DISTRIBUTION

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Senate Bill 412 (Substitute H-1)

Sponsor: Sen. Darwin L. Booher

House Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation

Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

First Analysis (3-13-12)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to expand the ways revenues from wild turkey hunting licenses are to be used by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

FISCAL IMPACT: Senate Bill 412 (H-1) would not increase revenues or expenditures for the Department of Natural Resources, but would increase the activities for which revenues from wild turkey licenses shall be used. In FY 2010-11, the total revenue from the sale of turkey licenses and license applications generated an estimated \$1.5 million. Approximately \$1.3 million of this funding is currently earmarked for the specific uses of scientific research, biological survey work, and turkey management. Under the provisions of the bill, the uses of this funding would be extended to the additional activities as described in the section labeled *Content of the Bill*.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (1994 PA 451) allows for the issuance of wild turkey hunting licenses and establishes fees for such licenses. The act also dedicates a portion of each license fee for specific purposes: scientific research, biological survey work, and wild turkey management. There is growing concern that license revenue should also be used for additional needed purposes, notably to create turkey habitat, conduct population surveys, and provide for disease testing.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

Under current law, the fee for a resident wild turkey hunting license is \$15, and the fee for a non-resident license is \$69. Additionally, the DNR can charge a non-refundable application fee of up to \$4 for each application that is entered into a lottery. Of the money collected from license and application fees, the DNR must use the specific amounts listed below for scientific research, biological survey work on wild turkeys, and wild turkey management.

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|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Resident wild turkey | \$9.50 |
| • Nonresident wild turkey | \$50.00 |
| • Senior wild turkey | \$1.00 |
| • Wild turkey hunting application | Up to \$3.00 of application fee |

In addition to the above uses, Senate Bill 412 would require the DNR to use those amounts cited above for the creation and management of wild turkey habitat on state land, national forestland, and private land; annual wild turkey hunter surveys; disease testing for wild turkeys suspected of having a disease and voluntarily submitted to the DNR; and other wild turkey management. The bill says that, to the extent possible, the DNR would have to use the revenues described above to create and manage wild turkey habitat on state forestland, state game areas, national forestland, and private land, where appropriate. The bill says that before January 1 of each year, the DNR would have to provide a report detailing the expenditures for the prior year to the standing committees of the House and Senate that primarily consider natural resources issues.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION:

The committee reported the bill as an H-1 substitute.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

There is concern that revenue from turkey hunting licenses is not being spent fairly. For example, a lot of money has been spent to establish turkey habitat in state game areas, primarily in southern Michigan, while much less has been spent on habitat on state forestland, which is mainly in northern Michigan. This bill is an attempt to better spend a limited amount of money to preserve and protect the wild turkey population throughout the state, but especially in areas where the population is declining.

Against:

There was no opposition at the committee level.

POSITIONS:

Department of Natural Resources supports the bill. (3-6-12)

Michigan United Conservation Clubs supports the bill. (3-6-12)

Michigan Wild Turkey Hunter's Association supports the bill. (2-14-12)

National Wild Turkey Federation - Michigan Chapter supports the bill. (3-6-12)

A member of the Board of Directors of the National Wild Turkey Federation indicated support of the bill. (3-6-12)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.