

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2016 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader - Revised**

House Bill 1223

(Delegate O'Donnell)

Environment and Transportation

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Natural Resources - Apprentice Hunting License - Establishment**

This bill establishes a one-time, nonrenewable, apprentice three-day hunting license that allows the purchaser to hunt all legal game birds and mammals for the three consecutive legal hunting days in a single season that are specified on the license, without the purchase of additional stamps (unless the purchaser is hunting migratory game birds or deer during bow and arrow or black powder season). The bill establishes various requirements relating to the license. The apprentice hunting license fee is \$10 for residents and \$20 for nonresidents. A person who has previously been issued any hunting license in Maryland is not eligible for an apprentice hunting license.

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Special fund revenues for the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund increase by an estimated \$100,000 annually beginning in FY 2017 from the sale of apprentice hunting licenses and associated license fees. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can issue the new licenses with existing budgeted resources; thus, expenditures are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
SF Revenue	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

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

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** A person must complete a short online or electronic course of instruction in competency in firearms and hunter safety that is approved by DNR prior to obtaining an apprentice hunting license. A person may only hunt under the apprentice license if (1) accompanied and directly supervised by a person who is at least age 18 and has a valid resident nonapprentice hunting license and (2) the person accompanying the apprentice hunter maintains close visual and verbal contact with, provides adequate direction to, and is in a position to immediately assume control of the firearm of the apprentice hunting licensee. However, if an apprentice hunting licensee has a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety, the licensee may hunt without supervision (unless the licensee is participating in a DNR-approved junior hunt).

**Current Law:** With certain exceptions, a person may not hunt or attempt to hunt during open season and in any permitted manner any game birds and mammals in the State without a resident or nonresident hunter's license. Resident and nonresident hunting licenses enable the purchaser to hunt all legal game birds and mammals during any appropriate season without the purchase of additional stamps, unless the purchaser is hunting migratory game birds, wild waterfowl, or deer during bow and arrow season or black powder season, in which case specified stamps are required. In general, unless grandfathered by having obtained a license prior to July 1, 1977, all hunters must obtain a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety in order to be eligible for a hunting license.

DNR establishes junior hunt days just for hunters younger than a certain age to hunt accompanied by a mentor. All young hunters participating in the junior hunting days must (1) have completed a hunter education course; (2) possess a valid hunting license (or be exempt from the license requirements); and (3) be accompanied in the field by an individual who:

- is at least age 21;
- possesses a valid Maryland hunting license, or is exempt from the license requirements; and
- is not afield with a firearm, bow, or other hunting device.

Hunters who are age 16 or younger may participate in the junior deer and turkey hunt days if they have completed a hunter education course and possess the printed receipt showing proof of purchase of the valid hunting license, or are exempt from the license requirements and have completed a hunter education course.

Hunters who are age 15 or younger may participate in the junior waterfowl hunt days if they possess a valid hunting license or are exempt from the license requirements. The

hunters must possess the printed receipt showing proof of purchase of the Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp.

A hunting license is valid for the period from August 1 through July 31 each year. Funds generated from any license, stamp, application, or permit fee under wildlife provisions in the Natural Resources Article must be credited to the State Wildlife Management and Protection Fund and used for the scientific investigation, protection, propagation, and management of wildlife.

Varying fees apply for hunting licenses and stamps. A resident hunting license is \$24.50, a resident senior hunting license is \$5.00, and a resident junior hunting license is \$10.50. A nonresident hunting license is \$130.00, a nonresident three-day hunting license is \$45.00, and a nonresident junior hunting license is \$32.50.

**Background:** Because white-tailed deer thrive in habitat that is composed of woods and openings and because hunter access in those areas is limited, suburban development has provided excellent deer habitat in the State. This has resulted in growing deer populations in suburban areas. Higher populations of deer can lead to a greater number of negative interactions with suburban residents, such as deer-vehicle collisions and vegetation damage. Deer also cause agricultural damage.

According to DNR, regulated hunting is the most cost-effective deer population control mechanism available throughout most of the State, and Sunday hunting has contributed positively to managing the State's white-tailed deer population in the counties where it is now permitted.

**State Revenues:** Special fund revenues for the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund increase by approximately \$100,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2017 due to the sale of the apprentice hunting license and associated fees. This estimate assumes that DNR issues 5,000 resident apprentice hunting licenses annually at \$10 each and 2,500 nonresident apprentice hunting licenses annually at \$20 each.

The estimate assumes that virtually all of the apprentice hunting licenses are issued after October 1 and that the number of licenses issued each year remains constant.

**Small Business Effect:** Authorizing the sale of an apprentice hunting license may have a meaningful economic impact on certain types of businesses throughout the State. DNR estimates that deer hunters in the State spent more than \$100 million on food, lodging, equipment, and transportation in 2006, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that, in 2011, the average hunter in Maryland spent \$49 per hunting day on trip-related expenditures and \$9.67 on ammunition.

In addition to businesses directly affected by hunting, the bill may also affect several other types of businesses. Most farms, for example, are small businesses. In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service estimated that Maryland deer caused \$7.7 million in agricultural damage statewide. Based on past estimates of crop damage losses, DNR estimates that an individual deer causes \$33.05 in agricultural damage annually. To the extent that the bill reduces crop damage, farmers benefit.

The bill may also affect vehicle owners and businesses involved in the repair of vehicles. DNR estimates that there were 31,300 deer-vehicle collisions in 2013 and that the average cost per collision is \$3,400. Reducing the deer population in the affected counties will likely reduce the number of deer-vehicle collisions, which will have a positive impact on vehicle owners and a corresponding negative impact on vehicle repair businesses.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, Department of Legislative Services

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