

Chapter 490

(House Bill 715)

AN ACT concerning

Fishing and Hunting Licenses and Trout Stamps – Complimentary Licenses and Stamp Exemption – Veterans Determined to Be Unemployable

FOR the purpose of authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to issue certain complimentary fishing and hunting licenses to certain veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines are unemployable; exempting certain veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines are unemployable from the requirement to obtain a trout stamp; and generally relating to fishing and hunting licenses and trout stamps.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Natural Resources
Section 4–607, 4–614(a), 4–745(e), and 10–303(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Natural Resources
Section 4–745(a)(1)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Natural Resources

4–607.

(a) (1) The Department may issue annually a complimentary angler’s license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official of the game and fish department of any other state.

(2) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary angler’s license to any Maryland resident who certifies that the resident is [a]:

(I) A former prisoner of war;

(II) AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; or

(III) A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

(3) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary angler's license to an out-of-state person [who]:

(I) WHO certifies that the person is [a]:

1. A former prisoner of war;
2. AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; or [a]
3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran [if the person's]; AND

(II) WHOSE state of residence extends similar privileges to former prisoners of war, AMERICAN VETERANS WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES ARE UNEMPLOYABLE, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of this State ~~THE INDIVIDUALS SPECIFIED IN ITEM (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.~~

(b) Not more than 20 complimentary angler's licenses for each state other than Maryland shall be outstanding at any time.

(c) A complimentary angler's license is not transferable and shall be issued without a fee.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "former prisoner of war" means a person who, while serving in the active military, naval, or air service of the United States, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

4-614.

(a) (1) The Department shall adopt regulations to establish fishing areas where a trout stamp is required.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, a person may not fish or possess trout in an area established in paragraph (1) of this subsection unless the person first obtains a trout stamp in addition to an angler's license.

(3) A trout stamp is not required of the following:

(i) A holder of a current resident consolidated senior sport fishing license issued under § 4–216 of this title;

(ii) A holder of a lifetime complimentary angler’s license [for 100% service connected disabled American veterans or former prisoners of war] issued under § 4–607(a)(2) or (3) of this subtitle;

(iii) A person authorized by a disability exemption issued under § 4–217 of this title;

(iv) Any resident serving in the armed forces of the United States while on leave in the State, during the resident’s leave period, if, while angling, the resident possesses a copy of the resident’s official leave order; or

(v) A person under 16 years of age.

(4) The stamp may be obtained from the Department or an authorized agent of the Department.

4–745.

(a) (1) Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d) of this section and § 4–217 of this title, a person may not fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay or in its tributaries up to tidal boundaries or in State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays and their tributaries without first obtaining a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license or registration issued under subsection (d)(3) of this section and possessing the license or registration.

(e) (1) In this subsection, “former prisoner of war” means a person who, while serving in the active military, naval, or air service of the United States, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

(2) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to any Maryland resident who certifies that the resident is [a]:

(I) A former prisoner of war;

(II) AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; or [a]

(III) A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

(3) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to an out-of-state person [who]:

(I) WHO certifies that the person is [a]:

1. A former prisoner of war;
2. **AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE;** or [a]
3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran [if the person's]; AND

(II) WHOSE state of residence extends similar privileges to ~~former~~ prisoners of war, **AMERICAN VETERANS WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES ARE UNEMPLOYABLE,** or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of this State. ~~THE INDIVIDUALS SPECIFIED IN ITEM (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION.~~

(4) A complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license is not transferable.

(5) The Department may issue annually a complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official of the game and fish department of any other state.

(6) Not more than 20 complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses for each state other than Maryland shall be outstanding at any time.

10-303.

(a) (1) The Department annually may issue a complimentary hunting license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, or an official or an enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of another state which reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses.

(2) (i) Subject to the requirements of § 10-301.1 of this subtitle, the Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to a Maryland resident who certifies that the resident is [a]:

1. A former prisoner of war;
2. **AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE;** or
3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

(ii) Subject to the requirements of § 10–301.1 of this subtitle, the Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to an out-of-state person [who]:

1. WHO certifies that the person is [a]:

A. A former prisoner of war;

B. AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; or [a]

C. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran [if the person's]; AND

2. WHOSE state of residence extends similar privileges to former prisoners of war, AMERICAN VETERANS WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES ARE UNEMPLOYABLE, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of this State. ~~THE INDIVIDUALS SPECIFIED IN ITEM 1 OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH SUBPARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS PARAGRAPH.~~

(3) A complimentary license is not transferable.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, May 9, 2024.