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SENATE BILL NO. 1125

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources
on February 12, 2025)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Boysko)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 29.1-417 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Department of Wildlife Resources; propagation of mammalian wildlife without a permit and premature separation unlawful.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 29.1-417 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 29.1-417. Capturing, holding, propagating, and disposing of wildlife for authorized purposes; premature separation and hybridization of mammalian wildlife.

A. The fee for a permit to capture, hold, propagate, and dispose of wildlife for purposes authorized by the Board shall be an amount sufficient to defray the costs of processing the permit and administering the permitted activity. However, in no instance shall the fees established by the Board exceed the following:

- 1. For endangered species, scientific collection and wildlife holder, \$20 per year; and
- 2. For all other such permits, \$50 per year.

B. The Board shall establish a permit to authorize the permittee to artificially raise trout, catfish, or largemouth bass and other members of the sunfish family for sale from a privately owned facility. Where the permittee allows public fishing from its facilities, if the fee provided for in subsection A has been paid, no license shall be required to fish from such a facility.

C. The Board shall establish standards for the possession and display of wildlife by elementary or secondary school teachers for educational purposes. No permit fee or application shall be required, and such display shall be deemed to be permitted so long as notification of the display is made to the Department and the exhibit is in compliance with the standards established by the Board. The Board's standards may include species permitted to be possessed and displayed, caging and enclosure requirements, prohibitions on release of wildlife, and notification requirements in the case of wildlife sickness or escape.

D. 1. It is unlawful to prematurely separate any mammalian wildlife offspring born in captivity from the mother prior to the natural time of weaning that is appropriate for such species, except such offspring may be prematurely separated (i) if a medical necessity exists pursuant to a written order from a veterinarian who is licensed to practice in the Commonwealth with appropriate species-specific experience and expertise or (ii) for an activity described under subdivision 2. In the case of a medical necessity, all reasonable efforts shall be made to safely reintroduce such separated offspring to the mother following any such premature separation. The Department, in consultation with qualified experts with formal education, expertise, and training in the species as appropriate, shall determine the natural time of weaning that is appropriate for a species.

2. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to (i) noncommercial transfers or trades between accredited zoological facilities, (ii) an accredited zoological facility that retains the mammalian wildlife offspring that has already been prematurely separated by such zoological facility, or (iii) a person operating under a wildlife rehabilitator permit issued by the Department.

E. It is unlawful to intentionally and for commercial purposes propagate mammalian wildlife of different species, also known as hybridization.

HOUSE SUBSTITUTE

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