

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB45

Patron: Fowler

Bill Title: Fees to hunt, fish, and trap; free or partially discounted, reimbursement.

Bill Summary: Requires the Department of Wildlife Resources to maintain an annual accounting of revenue that would have been received by the Department from license exemptions or free or partially discounted fees to hunt, fish, or trap that are established by the General Assembly on or after July 1, 2026, and to submit such accounting to the Department of Accounts by August 1 of each year. The bill requires the Department of Accounts to pay the actual amount of such revenue within 30 days into the Game Protection Fund and also allows the accounting required by the bill and any other records relating to such accounting to be subject to audit by the State Comptroller.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No

Items Impacted: None

Explanation: This bill involves the Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). The fiscal impact is indeterminate.

Fiscal Summary: The type of revenue and source for such appropriation required for reimbursement is unknown. The amount of any such reimbursement is indeterminate, as is a fund source for reimbursement. If the general fund were to be the source of reimbursement; such action would require an amendment to the Front Page of HB30/SSB30, as Introduced.

Fiscal Analysis: The bill provides for DWR to be reimbursed for foregone revenue resulting from license exemptions and free or discounted fees for certain licenses, subject to appropriation. The bill does not identify a funding source for such reimbursement. If the source is the general fund, the bill will result in an indeterminate general fund reduction and corresponding nongeneral fund increase.

The bill directs that the reimbursement be deposited to the Game Protection Fund. HB 30, as introduced, would transfer \$7.3 million from dedicated watercraft sales and use tax and \$12.6 million from estimates of general sales tax revenue from hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching equipment to the Game Protection Fund.

This impact statement is preliminary and may be updated if additional information becomes available.

Other: HB 1365 would increase from three to six the number of days that may be designated as “free fishing days” on which individuals would be exempt from certain fishing license requirements.