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**HOUSE BILL NO. 995**

Offered January 10, 2018

Prefiled January 9, 2018

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 29.1-516.1 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 29.1-305.3, relating to special license to track a bear or deer with dogs.*

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Patron—Byron

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Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That § 29.1-516.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 29.1-305.3 as follows:**

**§ 29.1-305.3. Special license to find a wounded or dead bear or deer with tracking dogs.**

*There shall be a special license for finding a wounded or dead bear or deer with tracking dogs maintained and controlled on a lead. The fee for the special license shall be the same as any license required by § 29.1-303.*

**§ 29.1-516.1. Using tracking dogs to find a wounded or dead bear or deer; humane killing permitted.**

~~Tracking~~ A. A tracker licensed pursuant to § 29.1-305.3 may use tracking dogs maintained and controlled on a lead ~~may be used~~ to find a wounded or dead bear or deer statewide during any archery, muzzleloader, or firearm bear or deer hunting season, or within 24 hours of the end of such season, provided that *he is engaged by a licensed hunter to track such animal* and those who are involved in the retrieval effort have permission to hunt on or to access the land being searched and do not have any weapons in their possession *unless exempted pursuant to subsection B*.

B. A tracker licensed pursuant to § 29.1-305.3 may have in his possession a weapon permitted under this title and may use such weapon to humanely kill the wounded bear or deer being tracked. Such weapon shall not be used to hunt, wound, or kill any animal other than the animal that the holder has been engaged to track, except in self-defense.

**2. That the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries shall adopt regulations pertaining to the license to find a wounded or dead bear or deer with tracking dogs and regulations for the safe practice of tracking with dogs maintained and controlled on a lead.**

INTRODUCED

HB995