

Department of Planning and Budget 2020 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Bill Number:** SB459

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. **Patron:** Reeves

3. **Committee:** Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

4. **Title:** Hunting and fishing licenses; veterans and active duty service members.

5. **Summary:** This bill authorizes any resident veteran or active duty service member to obtain at no cost a nontransferable license, valid for life, permitting the veteran or active duty service member to hunt and freshwater fish in the Commonwealth. Current law authorizes only a resident, disabled veteran to obtain such a license for no cost. The bill also authorizes a nonresident active duty service member to obtain such license for \$250.

6. **Budget Amendment Necessary:** No.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates:** Preliminary, see item 8.

8. **Fiscal Implications:** The fiscal implications of this bill are indeterminate, as number of veterans or active military in Virginia that are currently licensed hunters and anglers is unknown. However, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) has indicated that if veterans represent 10 to 20 percent of current license holders, then this bill is anticipated to result in a total revenue loss of approximately \$3.3 million to \$6.7 million annually of licensing revenue and federal funds received by the agency. DGIF expects that a portion of these losses would be offset by the sale of a \$250 Lifetime Non-Resident license for active duty service members and that revenue received from those sales would be cyclical in nature due to service member duty rotations.

DGIF has indicated that offering a free license would impact its eligibility to receive matching funds through the American System of Conservation Funding. In order to report a hunter or angler as a certified license holder, the agency must receive a minimum net revenue (currently \$2.00) for such license. Through this system, for each certified license holder that DGIF reports, Virginia receives approximately \$36.00 (\$26 for every hunting license and \$10 for every fishing license) in federal aid through the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program. Annual apportionments from this program, coupled with the sales of hunting and fishing license, represent more than three-fourths of DGIF's operating budget each year. As such, when the agency is required to issue free licenses, it impacts both state and federal revenue.

DGIF currently grants discounts and special privileges to Virginia's veteran population and grants active duty military members stationed in the Commonwealth the ability to

purchase licenses as residents.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.