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House Bill 4371 (Substitute H-2 as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Representative Peter Pettalia
House Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation
Senate Committee: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Date Completed: 6-16-11

CONTENT

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to do the following:

- **Eliminate the minimum hunting age.**
- **Require the Natural Resources Commission to establish a mentored youth hunting program.**
- **Establish a mentored youth hunting license for a person younger than 10, and allow a licensee to hunt with a mentor who was at least 21 in accordance with the program.**
- **Lower the age to 10 for certain discounted hunting license fees, and set a fee of \$7.50 for a mentored youth hunting license.**
- **Require the Department of Natural Resources to report to the Legislature every four years regarding the adequacy of the revenue from mentored youth hunting licenses.**

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2011.

Minimum Hunting Age

Under Part 435, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may issue a hunting license to a minor child (a person under 17) if all of the following requirements are met:

- A parent or legal guardian applies for the license on behalf of the minor child.
- The parent or guardian represents that the requirements of Part 435 regarding the conditions under which a minor may hunt will be complied with.
- The minor child is at least 10 years old or, if the license is a license to hunt deer, bear, or elk with a firearm, at least 12 years old.

The bill would retain these provisions but delete the minimum age requirements.

Part 435 requires the DNR to issue a combination deer license that authorizes an individual to hunt deer both during the firearm deer seasons and during the bow and arrow seasons. The bill would eliminate a provision stating that a combination deer license issued to a person younger than 12 is valid only for taking deer with a bow and arrow, until the person is at least 12 years old.

Under Part 435, the fee for a resident combination deer license is the total of the resident firearm deer license fee plus the resident bow and arrow deer license fee. The fee for a combination deer license for a resident or nonresident minor child is discounted 50% from the cost of the resident license. The bill would refer to a minor child who is at least 10 years old.

The fee for a resident fur harvester's license is \$15. For a resident or nonresident who is 12 through 16 years old, the fee is discounted 50% from the cost of the resident license. The bill would refer to a minor child who is at least 10, rather than a person who is 12 through 16 years old.

Mentored Youth Hunting Program & License

NRC Order. Within one year after the bill took effect, the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) would have to issue an order establishing a mentored youth hunting program. The order would have to require that a mentor be at least 21 years old before participating in the program, and that a mentor possess a valid hunting license, other than an apprentice license, before engaging in any mentored youth hunting program. The order also would have to provide that an individual could not be a mentor unless he or she presented proof of previous hunting experience in the form of a previous hunting license, other than an apprentice license, or certification of completion of training in hunter safety issued by the State of Michigan, another state, a province of Canada, or another country.

In establishing the program, the NRC would have to work with certified hunter safety instructors to ensure that the primary focus of the program was to instill exceptional hunter safety, hunter ethics, and conservation practices. The NRC would have to confer with mentored youth hunting programs in states that had established them and incorporate guidelines that had proven successful in increasing hunter participation.

Mentored Youth License. Only a minor who was younger than 10 years old could obtain a mentored youth hunting license. The minor could not hunt game under such a license unless he or she complied with all requirements of the mentored youth hunting program established by the NRC. The fee for a mentored youth hunting license would be \$7.50, and would include all of the privileges conferred by all of the following:

- Resident small game license.
- Combination deer license.
- All species fishing license.
- Spring and fall turkey hunting licenses.
- Resident fur harvester's license.

Minor Child: Hunting Conditions. Part 435 prohibits a parent or legal guardian of a minor child from permitting or allowing the child to hunt game under the authority of a license except under specified conditions. Depending on the child's age and the type of license, the child might be limited to hunting on private property; he or she might have to be accompanied by a parent or guardian, or another authorized person who is at least 18 or 21; or both conditions might apply.

Under the bill, the conditions under which a minor child must hunt with another person who is at least 18 would not apply if the child were younger than 10 years old. In that case, a parent or guardian could allow the child to hunt only with a mentor in compliance with the mentored youth hunting program.

DNR Report. Within four years after the bill took effect, and every four years after that, the DNR would have to submit to the standing committees of the Senate and House of Representatives with primary responsibility for conservation and outdoor recreation issues a

report evaluating whether the fee revenue the Department received from mentored youth hunting licenses was adequate to administer the mentored youth hunting program.

MCL 324.43517 et al.

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate impact on the Department of Natural Resources, depending on the level of participation in the Mentored Youth Hunting Program.

Fiscal Analyst: Bill Bowerman

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.