

March 8, 2010

SB-207

AN ACT CONCERNING RECENT INCREASES IN HUNTING AND FISHING
LICENSES AND AMENDING CERTAIN MOTOR VEHICLE FINES.

Hello Co-Chairs Rep. Roy and Sen. Meyer, members of the Environment Committee. I firmly oppose any increases of the hunting and fishing licensing fees. The 50% increase just on resident fishing licensing is totally uncalled for and unacceptable. The state is passing on the burdens of the financial mess to people like me and thousands of others who enjoy the great sport of fishing.

The licensing fee increases have caused many problems you may not be aware of. Now, I can buy a NON RESIDENT fishing license from Massachusetts for less then I would pay for a resident fishing license in my own state CT! This does not make sense and discourages people from enjoying Connecticut's rich natural resources.

This year I will NOT buy the Connecticut fishing license and will drive across the border in Massachusetts and use their fishing areas. I live on the border anyway so this will not inconvenience me as it would other residents.

Below, I have enclosed a variety of articles on what other states are doing in regard to sportsmen's fees. I also included my responses to question some of the articles posed. If you are not familiar with this issue, please read the following documents and you will see the enormous negative impact the fee increases are causing.

Sincerely,

Bob Roy
18 Circle Drive
Enfield, CT 06082

QUINN RAISES FEES ON FISHING, HUNTING - SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

By MIKE RIOPELL, JG/T-C Springfield Bureau

SPRINGFIELD — Hunting and fishing in Illinois will be more expensive next year.

Gov. Pat Quinn has finalized plans to hike fees for hunting and fishing licenses. The law setting higher prices for the various outdoors licenses and permits takes effect Jan. 1.

With the state facing a huge budget deficit, Quinn proposed the fee hikes earlier this year. The increases could bring the state Department of Natural Resources about \$3 million a year, spokeswoman Stacy Solano said.

Among the changes, the new law raises the cost of a fishing license from \$12.50 to \$14.50. A deer permit goes from \$15 to \$25, and hunting licenses rise from \$7 to \$12.

“These fees will help the agency’s efforts to enhance conservation opportunities, improve quality recreation and bolster efforts to generate more nature-based tourism dollars while also providing the people of Illinois with great outdoor experiences,” Solano said.

No increase in fees comes without at least some controversy. But state Rep. Dan Reitz, a Steeleville Democrat and the leader of sportsmen lawmakers, said the increases are acceptable if used for outdoors programs overseen by the Department of Natural Resources.

“The governor’s office assured us that all the money generated would stay in the department,” Reitz said.

Lawmakers approved the hikes earlier this year, and Quinn signed the legislation late Friday afternoon.

Part of Quinn’s original proposal was charging state park visitors \$5 per car. That fee isn’t part of the legislation signed Friday, and Solano said it’s unclear if Quinn will proceed with the idea.

There currently is no charge to visit a state park.

The legislation is Senate Bill 1846.

Bob Roy's response:

Will Connecticut's money from the hunting and fishing fees go into the right department or into the general fund?

How can they only go up 1.16% and we have to go up 50% ?

MICHIGAN HUNTING & FISHING LICENSES - BARGAINS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

By John Bebow, The Center for Michigan

October 19, 2007

Michigan boasts some of the very best hunting and fishing anywhere in the United States. Anglers and hunters vote with their waders and boots. Only two states (Texas and Pennsylvania) have more hunters than Michigan. Only four other states (Minnesota, Florida, Texas, and California) have more anglers than Michigan. 1

So, do Michigan hunters and anglers pay a high price for top-notch recreation? Are their hunting and fishing licenses expensive? Absolutely not. **The average angler in Michigan pays \$19.68 per year for a license. The average hunter pays \$35.28. Few, if any, states have better hunting and fishing than Michigan. But 39 states have cheaper hunting and 21 states have cheaper fishing (see charts below).** Michigan hasn't increased its hunting and fishing license fees since 1996. Because of inflation, you'd need a dollar and thirty-three cents today to buy what cost a dollar in 1996. If you're going to buy a new truck to go up north and go hunting or fishing, it'll cost you thousands of dollars more today than it did in 1996. And filling the gas tank in that truck will cost you xxxxxx what it did 11 years ago. But fishing's a bigger bargain than ever. A bargain too good to be true. An unsustainable bargain. For many months, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the state's leading outdoor recreation lobbying group, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, have pleaded with legislators to raise fishing license fees to support conservation officers who patrol our forests, lakes and streams to stop poachers and polluters, biologists who make sure those lands, waters, fish and game are healthy, habitat improvement projects, and many other routine costs of doing business if we're going to properly preserve and enhance the bountiful natural resources that cause so many people to hunt and fish in Michigan to begin with.

Hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing is, after all, a \$4 billion-a-year business in Michigan and will continue to be vibrant part of the Michigan economy – unless we ruin our woods and waters through

disinvestment. Under the hunting and fishing license increases proposed by the DNR (and supported by MUCC), anglers would pay \$40 per year for an all species license and \$30 per year for a firearm deer license. Licenses for out-of-state visitors would increase from \$42 to \$80 to fish and from \$138 to \$165 to shoot deer.

But legislators -- apparently trembling at the No-Tax Bogeyman and recall threats -- this month told

Michigan Natural Resources Commission Chairman Keith Charters that he can forget about it. License fee increases aren't going to happen. "We got a lot of sympathy, but you can't put sympathy between two slices of bread," Charters told the

MIRS news service last week. "Without a solution, draconian things will happen in November." Maybe legislators figure those lakes, streams, and wildlife habitats – and the \$4 billion economy they produce -- will just take care of themselves.

Bob Roy's response:

Seems Michagan's legislators have figured it is better to bring more people into the state and profit by that then by adding 50% increase in fees.

SPORTSMEN LICENSING FEE INCREASES FROM TEXAS:

Did you know that 100% of your hunting and fishing license fees go to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for on-the-ground conservation efforts that help make Texas one of the best places in the country to hunt and fish? Fish stocking, wildlife management, habitat restoration, land conservation, and Texas Game Wardens are just some of the initiatives funded in part by your license fees. Thank you for your investment in Texas' natural resources.

For more information on the types of licenses available, where you can purchase a license, hunting and fishing rules and regulations, and much more, explore the links on the left side of your screen.

If you have questions regarding the online sales application, please email license@tpwd.state.tx.us or call (800) 792-1112, Menu 4, Option 1.

Bob Roy's response:

Again I want to ask, does 100% of the fees go into the general fund or to the DEP which stocks the wonderful fishing areas of our state?

NEW FISHING LICENSE FEES GO INTO EFFECT SATURDAY – FLORIDA

07/31/09 - 02:49 PM – Associated Press

Tallahassee, Fla:

Shoreline saltwater fishing is no longer free in Florida. Starting tomorrow (Saturday), a new saltwater license takes effect for Floridians.

The new shoreline license is getting mixed reviews from anglers.

It costs \$9 a year and is required for Florida residents who go saltwater fishing from the shore or a pier. **But if you buy the state's regular fishing license for \$17, you can fish from either the shore or a boat.** State lawmakers created the new shoreline license mainly because the federal government is planning to establish its own licensing requirement in 2011 and it will be more expensive than Florida's \$9 annual fee. So state officials say anglers will actually save money under Florida's new fishing rules. Lee Schlesinger of the Florida Fish and wildlife Conservation Commission says you may want to buy the more expensive \$17 saltwater fishing license if you plan to do any fishing from a boat.

"The new shoreline license for Florida residents is good for a person who feels like they're never really going to go on a boat and fish. If you think you may want to go on a boat sometime during the year and fish, probably the regular fishing license is the best bet for you," Schlesinger said. "I think it's ridiculous. People are trying to make ends meet as it is right now with the economy what it is and for them to cause people to have to go out there and buy a license so they can go out and catch fish that a lot of people go out and eat, I think that's pushing the limit right now," Rick Looney said.

"As long as the money is put in a proper fund and is transferred to youth programs and fisheries, I don't have a problem with it," David Fletcher said. Angler Rick Looney calls the shoreline license ridiculous. He says a lot of people are struggling to make ends meet right now so the state should not force them to spend more money on a brand new license. On the other side of the issue, David Fletcher says he doesn't have a problem with the shoreline license as long as the money is used to promote youth fishing programs and fisheries. Schlesinger says all of the cash will go to Florida's fishing programs. There are some exemptions for the new license, including children 16 and under, senior citizens, disabled people, anyone who gets government assistance and active-duty soldiers on leave. Also, you're exempt if you use a fishing pole in your home county that does not have a reel or other line retrieval mechanism. Fines will range up to \$70, but Schlesinger says officers will focus on raising awareness of the new license during the first few months of the program.

Read more:

http://www.panhandleparade.com/index.php/mbb/article/new_fishing_license_fees_go_into_effect_saturday/mbb7718027/#ixzz0hKjVPuBp

Bob Roy's response:

why is it we are paying \$40.00 again? and again I ask is all the money from these fees in Ct. going into the general fund? If so why?

BLOG ON HUNTING AND FISHING

Somehow, during all of the economic turmoil of this past year, some Connecticut politicians got it in their heads that maybe they could skim a few extra bucks from non-resident anglers who fish in CT.

I don't know all the background information yet, but sometime during the past few months the cost of a non-resident CT freshwater fishing license jumped from \$40 to \$80, a 100% price increase.

I don't have proof yet to back up my opinion, but I'm more than willing to bet that this makes CT one of the most expensive states in the country to buy a non-resident fishing license. Heck, I'm even willing to bet that they're *THE* most expensive state in the country. Obviously, as an angler, I find this to be completely ridiculous, and even offensive.. Believe me... I fully understand that the state government needs to raise much-needed income, but to force a 100% price increase in license fees and try to squeeze it out of anglers is one of the most moronic things I've seen in a long time (except for Obama's so-called healthcare reform. But that's another story.)

I'll be doing some research during the coming weeks to get more information on this. I'll also be formulating a plan to combat this and make the voices of non-resident anglers heard in CT. This obviously slid through the greasy halls of lawmakers unopposed by anglers, apparently due to ignorance on the part of the anglers. Chalk up another sneaky, underhanded law on the part of our wonderful state legislators.

Stay tuned for more info on this subject during the coming weeks. I hope to be able to put together an effort that will, at the very least, give us a means of signing a petition that can be sent to CT lawmakers to express our opinion on this issue.

"In times of economic stress, many people turn to simple, outdoor pursuits that are easy to do, are close to home, are not expensive and can be enjoyed by everyone in the family," said Jeff Pontius, president, ZEBCO Brands and ASA's Board of Directors chairman. "Recreational fishing certainly fits that description. We know from past experience that in recessionary times, fishing retains, and even increases, in its popularity."

Bob's response:

Notice how it says NOT EXPENSIVE?????

