



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – February 9, 2011
Environment Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Amey W. Marrella
Department of Environment Protection

Committee House Bill No. 5205 - AN ACT CONCERNING HUNTING, TRAPPING AND SPORT FISHING LICENSE FEES FOR OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENTS.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding Committee House Bill No. 5205 - AN ACT CONCERNING HUNTING, TRAPPING AND SPORT FISHING LICENSE FEES FOR OUT-OF-STATE RESIDENTS. The Department of Environmental Protection (Department) offers the following testimony.

We understand and appreciate that it is the intent of this legislation to promote tourism in Connecticut and to ensure equity in the fees paid by sportsmen from Connecticut and other states when hunting, trapping or fishing out-of-state. However, the Department is concerned that the proposed approach is overly complicated and could compromise the functioning of our automated licensing system and the benefits it provides to all of the State's hunters and anglers.

Committee Bill No. 5205 proposes to establish fees for out-of-state sportsmen at levels equal to the amount that the person's home state would charge a Connecticut resident. On the surface this seems like a simple approach; however, it is made exceedingly complicated by the fact that various states package their licenses differently than Connecticut. For example, a basic hunting license in one state may allow different activities than a basic hunting license in another state. This makes one-to-one comparisons and setting equal fees very difficult.

Additionally, state laws requiring tags, permits, and stamps for hunting and fishing or any combination thereof vary, making it even more difficult to determine equal fees. Given this, it will be difficult and costly for the Department's automated license system to be programmed to determine the cost of an individual license, tag, permit, or stamp based on the state of residence and the privileges being purchased. Furthermore, once the system is programmed, the automated license system would have to be continually updated as prices of any of the myriad licenses, tags, permits, stamps, and combinations thereof are changed in any of the 50 states.

Connecticut has implemented an automated licensing system to fulfill sportsmen's license purchases. This system is proprietary and the changes contemplated by this bill would require significant modifications to our licensing system. We estimate that programming costs for the changes contemplated would be at least \$200,000.00.

An alternative approach for promoting tourism and providing equity would be to adjust specific out-of-state sportsmen fees such that the fee charged by Connecticut is near the median fee charged by other Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states for similar privileges. The Department would welcome the opportunity to work with the proponents of the bill to discuss our concerns or this alternative approach further.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact the Department's legislative liaison, Robert LaFrance, at (860) 424-3401 or Robert.LaFrance@ct.gov.