



Senate Bill No. 1020

Public Act No. 13-248

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INTERSTATE WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*)

INTERSTATE WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT

ADOPTION OF COMPACT

The Wildlife Violator Compact is hereby enacted into law and entered into by the state of Connecticut with any and all states legally joining therein in accordance with its terms. The compact is substantially as follows:

ARTICLE I

Findings, Declaration of Policy and Purpose

(a) The party states find that:

(1) Wildlife resources are managed in trust by the respective states for the benefit of all residents and visitors.

(2) The protection of their respective wildlife resources may be

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materially affected by the degree of compliance with state statute or rule relating to the management of those resources.

(3) The preservation, protection, management, and restoration of wildlife contributes immeasurably to the aesthetic, recreational, and economic aspects of these natural resources.

(4) Wildlife resources are valuable without regard to political boundaries; therefore, all persons should be required to comply with wildlife preservation, protection, management, and restoration statutes, rules, and other law of all party states as a condition precedent to the continuance or issuance of any license to hunt, fish, trap, or possess wildlife.

(5) Violation of wildlife laws interferes with the management of wildlife resources and may endanger the safety of persons and property.

(6) The mobility of many wildlife law violators necessitates the maintenance of channels of communications among the various states.

(7) A person who is cited for a wildlife violation in a state other than the person's home state:

(A) May be required to post collateral or bond to secure appearance for a trial at a later date;

(B) If unable to post collateral or bond, may be taken into custody until the collateral or bond is posted; or

(C) May be taken directly to court for an immediate appearance.

(8) The purpose of the enforcement practices described in subdivision (7) of this subsection is to ensure compliance with the terms of a wildlife citation by the person who, if permitted to continue on the person's way after receiving the citation, could return to the

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person's home state and disregard the person's duty under the terms of the citation.

(9) A person receiving a wildlife citation in the person's home state is permitted to accept the citation from the officer at the scene of the violation and to continue immediately on the person's way after agreeing or being instructed to comply with the terms of the citation.

(10) The practice described in subdivision (7) of this subsection causes unnecessary inconvenience and, at times, a hardship for the person who is unable at the time to post collateral, furnish a bond, stand trial, or pay the fine, and thus is compelled to remain in custody until some alternative arrangement can be made.

(11) The enforcement practices described in subdivision (7) of this subsection consume an undue amount of law enforcement time.

(b) It is the policy of the party states to:

(1) Promote compliance with the statutes, rules, and other applicable law relating to management of wildlife resources in their respective states.

(2) Recognize the suspension of wildlife license privileges or rights of any person whose license privileges or rights have been suspended by a party state and treat this suspension as if it had occurred in the person's state.

(3) Allow violators to accept a wildlife citation, except as provided in subsection (b) of Article III of this compact, and be released without delay whether or not the person is a resident in the state in which the citation was issued, provided that the violator's home state is party to this compact.

(4) Report to the appropriate party state any conviction that would

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subject a person to suspension and that is recorded against any person whose home state was not the issuing state.

(5) Allow the home state to recognize and treat a conviction that would subject a person to suspension and that is recorded for their residents and which occurred in another party state as if the conviction had occurred in the home state.

(6) Extend cooperation to its fullest extent among the party states for obtaining compliance with the terms of a wildlife citation issued in one party state to a resident of another party state.

(7) Maximize effective use of law enforcement personnel and information.

(8) Assist court systems in the efficient disposition of wildlife violations.

(c) The purpose of this compact is to:

(1) Provide a means through which the party states may participate in a reciprocal program to effectuate policies enumerated in subsection (b) of this article in a uniform and orderly manner.

(2) Provide for the fair and impartial treatment of wildlife violators operating within party states in recognition of the person's right of due process and the sovereign status of a party state.

ARTICLE II

Definitions

The definitions in this article apply throughout this compact and are intended only for the implementation of this compact:

(1) "Citation" means any summons, complaint, ticket, penalty

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assessment, or other official document issued by a wildlife officer or other peace officer for a wildlife violation containing an order which requires the person to respond.

(2) "Collateral" means any cash or other security deposited to secure an appearance for trial in connection with the issuance by a wildlife officer or other peace officer of a citation for a wildlife violation.

(3) "Compliance" with respect to a citation means the act of answering the citation through appearance at a court, a tribunal, or payment of fines, costs, and surcharges, if any, or both such appearance and payment.

(4) "Conviction" means a conviction, including any court conviction, of any offense related to the preservation, protection, management, or restoration of wildlife which is prohibited by state statute, rule, or other relevant law, or a forfeiture of bail, bond, or other security deposited to secure the appearance by a person charged with having committed any such offense, or payment of a penalty assessment, or a plea of nolo contendere, or the imposition of a deferred or suspended sentence by the court.

(5) "Court" means a court of law.

(6) "Home state" means the state of primary residence of a person.

(7) "Issuing state" means the party state which issues a wildlife citation to the violator.

(8) "License" means any license, permit, or other public document that conveys to the person to whom it was issued the privilege of pursuing, possessing, or taking any wildlife regulated by statute, rule, or other relevant law of a party state.

(9) "Licensing authority" means the department within each party

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state authorized by law to issue or approve licenses or permits to hunt, fish, trap, or possess wildlife.

(10) "Party state" means any state which enacts legislation to become a member of this wildlife compact.

(11) "Personal recognizance" means an agreement by a person made at the time of issuance of the wildlife citation that the person will comply with the terms of that citation.

(12) "State" means any state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(13) "Suspension" means any revocation, denial, or withdrawal of any or all license privileges or rights, including the privilege or right to apply for, purchase, or exercise the benefits conferred by any license.

(14) "Terms of the citation" means those conditions and options expressly stated upon the citation.

(15) "Wildlife" means all species of animals, including, but not necessarily limited to, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, mollusks, and crustaceans, which are defined as "wildlife" and are protected or otherwise regulated by statute, rule, or other relevant law in a party state. "Wildlife" also means food fish and shellfish as defined by statute, rule, or other relevant law in a party state. Species included in the definition of "wildlife" vary from state to state and determination of whether a species is "wildlife" for the purposes of this compact shall be based on state law.

(16) "Wildlife law" means any statute, law, regulation, ordinance, or administrative rule developed and enacted to manage wildlife resources and the use thereof.

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(17) "Wildlife officer" means any individual authorized by a party state to issue a citation for a wildlife violation.

(18) "Wildlife violation" means any cited violation of a statute, rule, or other relevant law developed and enacted to manage wildlife resources and the use thereof.

ARTICLE III

Procedures for Issuing State

(a) When issuing a citation for a wildlife violation, a wildlife officer shall issue a citation to any person whose primary residence is in a party state in the same manner as if the person were a resident of the home state and shall not require the person to post collateral to secure appearance, subject to the exceptions contained in subsection (b) of this article, if the officer receives the person's personal recognizance that the person will comply with the terms of the citation.

(b) Personal recognizance is acceptable:

(1) If not prohibited by local law or the rules of the department of fish and wildlife; and

(2) If the violator provides adequate proof of the violator's identification to the wildlife officer.

(c) Upon conviction of a wildlife violation subject to suspension or upon failure of a person to comply with the terms of a wildlife citation, the appropriate official shall report the conviction or failure to comply with the licensing authority of the party state in which the wildlife citation was issued. The report shall be made in accordance with procedures specified by the issuing state.

(d) Upon receipt of the report of conviction or noncompliance required by subsection (c) of this article, the licensing authority of the

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issuing state shall transmit to the licensing authority in the home state of the violator the information in a form and content specified by the department of fish and wildlife in rule.

ARTICLE IV

Procedures for Home State

(a) Upon receipt of a report of a failure to comply with the terms of a citation from the licensing authority of the issuing state, the licensing authority of the home state shall notify the violator, shall initiate a suspension action in accordance with the home state's enforcement procedures, and shall suspend the violator's license privileges or rights until satisfactory evidence of compliance with the terms of the wildlife citation has been furnished by the issuing state to the home state licensing authority. Due process safeguards will be accorded.

(b) Upon receipt of a report of conviction of a wildlife violation subject to suspension from the licensing authority of the issuing state, the licensing authority of the home state shall enter such conviction in its records according to current procedure and shall treat such conviction as if it occurred in the home state for the purposes of the suspension of license privileges and for the purposes of the term of the suspension of privileges.

(c) The licensing authority of the home state shall maintain a record of actions taken and make reports to issuing states as provided in rules adopted by the department of fish and wildlife.

ARTICLE V

Reciprocal Recognition of Suspension

All party states shall recognize the suspension of license privileges or rights of any person by any party state as if the violation on which

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the suspension is based had in fact occurred in the person's state and would have been the basis for suspension of license privileges or rights in his or her state.

ARTICLE VI

Applicability of Other Laws

Except as expressly required by provisions of this compact, nothing herein shall be construed to affect the right of any party state to apply any of its laws relating to license privileges to any person or circumstance, or to invalidate or prevent any agreement or other cooperative arrangements between a party state and a nonparty state concerning wildlife law enforcement.

ARTICLE VII

Compact Administrator Procedures

(a) For the purpose of administering the provisions of this compact and to serve as a governing body for the resolution of all matters relating to the operation of this compact, a board of compact administrators is established. The board of compact administrators shall be composed of one representative from each of the party states to be known as the compact administrator. The compact administrator shall be appointed by the head of the licensing authority of each party state, except that in Connecticut the compact administrator shall be the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection, or the commissioner's designee, and will serve and be subject to removal in accordance with the laws of the state the administrator represents. A compact administrator may provide for the discharge of the administrator's duties and the performance of the administrator's functions as a board of compact administrators' member by an alternate. An alternate may not be entitled to serve unless written notification of the alternate's identity has been given to the board of

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compact administrators.

(b) Each member of the board of compact administrators shall be entitled to one vote. No action of the board of compact administrators shall be binding unless taken at a meeting at which a majority of the total number of votes on the board of compact administrators are cast in favor thereof. Action by the board of compact administrators shall be only at a meeting at which a majority of the party states are represented.

(c) The board of compact administrators shall elect annually, from its membership, a chairperson and vice chairperson.

(d) The board of compact administrators shall adopt bylaws, not inconsistent with the provisions of this compact or the laws of a party state, for the conduct of its business and shall have the power to amend and rescind its bylaws.

(e) The board of compact administrators may accept for any of its purposes and functions under this compact all donations and grants of money, equipment, supplies, materials, and services, conditional or otherwise, from any state, the United States, or any governmental agency, and may receive, utilize, and dispose of the same.

(f) The board of compact administrators may contract with or accept services or personnel from any governmental or intergovernmental agency, individual, firm, corporation, or any private nonprofit organization or institution.

(g) The board of compact administrators shall formulate all necessary procedures and develop uniform forms and documents for administering the provisions of this compact. All procedures and forms adopted pursuant to the board of compact administrators' action shall be contained in the rules adopted by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection ("the Department").

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ARTICLE VIII

Entry Into Compact and Withdrawal

(a) This compact shall become effective when it has been adopted by at least two states.

(b) (1) Entry into the compact shall be made by an act or resolution of ratification executed by the authorized officials of the applying state and submitted to the chairperson of the board of compact administrators.

(2) The act or resolution shall include statements that in substance are as follows:

(A) A citation of the authority by which the state is empowered to become a party to this compact;

(B) Agreement to comply with the terms and provisions of the compact; and

(C) That compact entry is with all states then party to the compact and with any state that legally becomes a party to the compact.

(3) The effective date of entry shall be specified by the applying state, but shall not be less than sixty days after notice has been given by the chairperson of the board of compact administrators or by the secretariat of the board of compact administrators to each party state that has received the resolution from the applying state.

(c) A party state may withdraw from this compact by official written notice to the other party states, but a withdrawal shall not take effect until ninety days after notice of withdrawal is given. The notice shall be directed to the compact administrator of each member state. No withdrawal shall affect the validity of this compact as to the remaining party states.

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ARTICLE IX

Amendments to the Compact

(a) This compact may be amended from time to time. Amendments shall be presented in resolution form to the chairperson of the board of compact administrators and may be initiated by one or more party states.

(b) Adoption of an amendment shall require endorsement by all party states and shall become effective thirty days after the date of the last endorsement.

(c) Failure of a party state to respond to the compact chairperson within one hundred twenty days after receipt of the proposed amendment shall constitute endorsement.

ARTICLE X

Construction and Severability

This compact shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate the purposes stated herein. The provisions of this compact shall be severable, and if any phrase, clause, sentence, or provision of this compact is declared to be contrary to the constitution of any party state or of the United States, or the applicability thereof to any government, agency, individual, or circumstance is held invalid, the compact shall not be affected thereby. If this compact shall be held contrary to the constitution of any party state thereto, the compact shall remain in full force and effect as to the remaining states and in full force and effect as to the state affected as to all severable matters.

ARTICLE XI

Compact Title

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This compact shall be known as the Wildlife Violator Compact.

Compact Administrator

The compact administrator for Connecticut shall be the commissioner of the Department or a designated representative of the commissioner. The duties of the compact administrator shall be deemed a regular part of the duties of the office of the commissioner of the Department.

Rulemaking

The Department may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

Penalties

(a) The commissioner of the Department may suspend a Connecticut hunting, fishing, or trapping license of a person convicted of a wildlife violation in a state party to the compact, provided that the wildlife violation would have been the basis for suspension of license privileges in Connecticut.

(b) No person whose license, privilege, or right to hunt, fish, trap, possess, or transport wildlife, having been suspended or revoked pursuant to this chapter, shall be issued a license to hunt, fish, or trap in Connecticut.

(c) (1) Prior to suspending a Connecticut hunting, fishing, or trapping license of a person under subsection (a) of this article, the commissioner shall notify the person in writing. A suspension shall be deemed effective:

(A) When given if notice is made in person; or

(B) Three days after the deposit of notice in the United States mails,

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if notice is made in writing.

(2) A person receiving notice under subsection (a) of this article may, within twenty days of the date notice is given, request a hearing before the commissioner on whether the requirements for suspension or penalty have been met. The requesting person may present evidence and arguments at the hearing only regarding whether:

(A) A participating state suspended the person's privileges;

(B) There was a conviction in the participating state;

(C) The person failed to comply with the terms of a citation issued for a wildlife violation in a participating state; or

(D) A conviction in a participating state could have led to a license suspension or penalty in Connecticut.

(3) At the hearing, the commissioner or a hearing officer designated by the commissioner may:

(A) Administer oaths;

(B) Issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses; and

(C) Admit all relevant evidence and documents, including notifications from participating states.

(4) Following a hearing under this subsection, the commissioner or a designated hearing officer may, based on the evidence, affirm, modify, or rescind the suspension of a license or the assessment of a penalty.

(5) A suspension of a license under chapter 490 of the general statutes is a civil suspension, and a decision of the commissioner or hearing officer under this section shall not be appealable.

Withdrawal From the Compact

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Withdrawal of Connecticut from the compact, as authorized under Article VIII of the compact, shall be by an act or resolution of the General Assembly.

Sec. 2. Section 26-26a of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective October 1, 2013*)

Approved July 11, 2013