

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 14-201—sSB 241**  
*Environment Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES,  
REVISING CERTAIN HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE FEES AND  
REQUIRING REGISTRATION BY HUNTING AND FISHING GUIDE  
SERVICES**

**SUMMARY:** This act makes various changes in the state's hunting and fishing statutes. Among other things, it:

1. requires 16-year-olds to obtain fishing licenses to fish in Connecticut waters, to conform to current licensing practices;
2. exempts from the fishing license requirement secondary school students participating in school fishing events or field trips that teach fishing techniques;
3. changes certain hunting and fishing license fees, including reducing specific fees by 50% for 16- and 17-year-old residents;
4. allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to designate up to two days each calendar year when it can issue free one-day sport fishing licenses;
5. allows DEEP, with the Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) approval, to occasionally offer reduced fees for hunting and fishing licenses and permits;
6. requires instructors to offer hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses online or in a classroom and allows them to charge a course fee the DEEP commissioner establishes;
7. requires hunting and fishing guides to annually register with DEEP and pay a \$100 fee; and
8. allows the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the hunting and fishing guide requirements.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2015, except for the provisions related to safety courses, which are effective October 1, 2014.

**§ 1 — FISHING LICENSES**

*Age Requirement*

The act lowers the age for obtaining a fishing license from over age 16 to age 16, thus conforming the statute to DEEP's current practice of licensing 16-year-olds.

*Exemption for Certain Students*

The act exempts from the fishing license requirement, with the DEEP

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commissioner's written authorization, Connecticut secondary school students (i.e., grades nine through 12) participating in school fishing events or field trips that teach fishing techniques. The fishing event or field trip must be part of a school course, and the school must apply for the commissioner's authorization on a form he prescribes.

### § 2 — HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE FEES

#### *Changed License Fees*

The act (1) increases one resident combination hunting and fishing license fee, (2) reduces two resident super sport combination license fees, and (3) reduces the group fishing license fee, as Table 1 shows.

**Table 1: Hunting and Fishing License Fees**

<i>License</i>	<i>Prior Law</i>	<i>The Act</i>
Combination (all-waters fishing and firearms hunting)	\$38	\$40
Firearms super sport (all-waters fishing, firearms hunting, deer on private land with shotgun or rifle, and wild turkey in spring on private land)	80	70
Firearms super sport (all-waters fishing, firearms hunting, migratory bird conservation stamp, and migratory bird harvest permit)	60	50
Group fishing license	250	125

#### *Fees Charged 16- and 17-Year-Olds*

The act reduces by 50%, rounded to the next highest dollar, the fees charged to 16- and 17-year-old residents for any firearms or archery hunting, trapping, or sport fishing (1) license or (2) permit, tag, or stamp for taking waterfowl, salmon, pheasant, turkey, migratory game birds, deer, or small game.

#### *Free One-Day Sport Fishing License*

The act allows the DEEP commissioner to designate up to two days each year when he may issue free one-day sport fishing licenses. He can make free licenses available to all members of (1) the public or (2) an age group he designates. The law already requires him to designate one day each year when no license is required for sport fishing.

#### *DEEP's Authority to Offer Reduced Fees*

The act allows the DEEP commissioner, with the OPM secretary's concurrence, to occasionally offer reduced fees for certain hunting and fishing licenses, permits, tags, and stamps in order to increase participation in such activities. These include firearms or archery hunting, trapping, or sport fishing licenses and permits, tags, or stamps for taking waterfowl, salmon, pheasant,

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turkey, migratory game birds, deer, or small game.

Reduced fees must be allowed only for a portion of a year and be effective during the calendar year in which the reduction is offered. Also, the commissioner may offer reduced fees only if the reduction is offered to (1) all members of the public; (2) all members of a certain age group; or (3) people who successfully complete a fishing education or hunting, trapping, or archery safety course within that calendar year.

### § 3 — HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND ARCHERY SAFETY COURSES

The act requires hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses to be provided online or in a classroom. Prior law allowed the courses to be provided by any means. The act also allows anyone authorized to conduct hunting, trapping, or archery courses to charge a reasonable course fee the DEEP commissioner establishes. Prior law only allowed trapping instructors to charge a fee the DEEP commissioner established by regulation.

### §§ 4 & 5 — HUNTING OR FISHING GUIDES

#### *Registration*

The act prohibits people from providing hunting or fishing guide services in Connecticut unless they annually (1) register with DEEP on a form the commissioner prescribes and (2) pay a \$100 registration fee. The form must include the registrant's name, residential and business addresses, business telephone number, and services offered. Registrations are nontransferable and expire on December 31 following their issuance.

The act also prohibits a person from operating a vessel to provide hunting or fishing guide services on state waters unless he or she (1) is registered with DEEP as a hunting or fishing guide and (2) holds a current U.S. Coast Guard passenger-for-hire license.

Under the act, a user, operator, or crew member of a registered charter, party, or head boat is exempt from these requirements.

The act defines "hunting or fishing guide services" as aiding, assisting, or instructing anyone, in exchange for payment, in the taking of fish or wildlife while in Connecticut fields or forests or on Connecticut waters.

#### *Limitation*

The act limits to two the number of customers that a fishing guide can have on a vessel when taking or landing marine species.

#### *Penalties*

A violator of the hunting or fishing guide requirements commits an infraction punishable by a fine of up to \$90 and can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

#### *Regulations*

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The act authorizes the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the hunting and fishing guide requirements.

OLR Tracking: JLK:JO:PF:ro