

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/HB 327 — Illegal Taking, Possession, and Sale of Bears

by Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee and Rep. D. Smith and others (CS/CS/SB 688 by Criminal Justice Committee; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senator Wright)

The bill increases the penalty for taking or possessing a freshly killed bear during the closed season. Under the bill, a person who commits such offenses commits a Level Three violation (a first-degree misdemeanor for the first offense) and forfeits any other Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) license or permit for three years from the violation date. A person who commits a subsequent offense of taking a bear or possessing a freshly killed bear is permanently ineligible for issuance of any FWC license or permit. A person who possesses for sale or sells an illegally-taken bear commits a Level Four violation (a third-degree felony).

The bill provides an exception to the prohibited acts if a person is acting under the authority of FWC Rules.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2020.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 114-0