

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: CS/SB 1384

SPONSOR: Natural Resources Committee and Senator Laurent

SUBJECT: Hunting and Fishing Licenses

DATE: March 26, 1999 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Green</u>	<u>Voigt</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
2.	<u>Keating</u>	<u>Wood</u>	<u>FR</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill eliminates the 3-day \$5 non-resident freshwater fishing license. Provides that the Legislature shall review the fees for licenses and permits established under chapter 372 every five years during the regular session of the Legislature beginning with the 2000 Regular Session. Eliminates the 3-day \$5 non-resident saltwater fishing license.

The bill amends ss. 372.57 and 370.0605, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, and creates s. 372.5711, Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 372.57(2), F.S., provides freshwater fishing licenses for non-residents as follows: \$5 for a 3-day license, \$15 for a 7-day license, and \$30 for a 1-year. This 3-day \$5 license was implemented in 1997. Many customers who previously bought the 7-day \$15 non-resident freshwater license began buying the 3-day \$5 license. Because these customers are buying the cheaper license, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) contends it loses approximately \$600,000 per year in non-resident license fees. The creation of the 3-day \$5 non-resident freshwater fishing license failed to add sufficient customers to offset this loss. Freshwater fishing license revenues are deposited into the State Game Trust Fund of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Section 370.0605(2)3., F.S., provides saltwater fishing license fees for non-residents as follows: \$5 for a 3-day license, \$15 for a 7-day license, and \$30 for a 1-year license. Saltwater fishing license fees are deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund of the Department of Environmental Protection. In fiscal year 1997-98, the 3-day/\$5 non-resident saltwater fishing license raised \$869,572 and the 7-day/\$15 non-resident saltwater license raised \$859,816.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. The bill amends s. 372.57, F.S., to eliminate the 3-day \$5 non-resident freshwater fishing license.

Section 2. The bill creates s. 372.5711, F.S., to require that the Legislature review the fees for licenses and permits established under chapter 372, and exemptions thereto, during the regular session of the Legislature every 5 years beginning with the 2000 Regular Session.

Section 3. The bill amends s. 370.0605, F.S., to eliminate the 3-day \$5 non-resident saltwater fishing license.

Section 4. The bill will take effect July 1, 1999.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

The Revenue Estimating Conference looked at the fiscal impact of elimination of the 3-day/\$5 non-resident freshwater fishing licenses. The elimination will result in additional sales of the 7-day/\$15 non-resident freshwater fishing licenses which is estimated to increase revenues to the State Game Trust Fund by \$500,000 annually.

Elimination of the 3-day/\$5 non-resident saltwater fishing licenses has not been reviewed by the Revenue Estimating Conference. As with the freshwater fishing license, the elimination will result in additional sales of the 7-day/\$15 non-resident saltwater fishing licenses.

Issue/Fund	General Revenue		Trust		Local		Total	
	1st Year \$	Recurring \$	1st Year \$	Recurring \$	1st Year \$	Recurring \$	1st Year \$	Recurring \$
Elimination of 3-day/\$5 non-resident fishing lic.								
1. Freshwater	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5
2. Saltwater	0.0	0.0	**	**	0.0	0.0	**	**

* Insignificant
 ** Indeterminate

B. Private Sector Impact:

Eliminating the 3-day \$5 non-resident freshwater fishing license would leave consumers to choose between two existing licenses, the \$30 annual non-resident freshwater license and the 7-day \$15 nonresident freshwater license. Similarly, eliminating the 3-day \$5 non-resident saltwater fishing license would leave consumers with the same choice between a \$30 annual non-resident saltwater license and a 7-day \$15 non-resident saltwater license.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The loss of revenue on the 3-day non-resident freshwater fishing license and the fee structure for other licenses and permits offered by GFC is an important issue. Total hunting and fishing license revenues make up only 30 percent of GFC’s total revenues, including matching federal funds. GFC faces a budget shortfall in the State Game Trust Fund. With annual pay raises and increases in health insurance costs, expenditures in fiscal year 1999-2000 will exceed revenues by \$2.7 million. This will fully deplete the balance in the State Game Trust Fund by the end of fiscal year 1999-2000. Without increasing revenues or reducing expenditures, the State Game Trust Fund will face a \$4.5 million shortfall by the end of fiscal year 2000-2001. One way to address some of this shortfall is a thorough review of the hunting and fishing licenses and permits GFC offers, and the fees charged for those licenses and permits.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

After discovering the loss of revenue resulting from the creation of the 3-day \$5 non-resident freshwater license, GFC staff reviewed existing angler survey data and license sales history, and conducted a survey of Florida bait and tackle stores and marina owners to find possible solutions. GFC staff discovered that 13 other states sell 3-day nonresident freshwater licenses at an average cost of \$13.55. Florida’s 3-day \$5 nonresident freshwater license fee is way under the national average. Also surveys indicate non-resident anglers fish an average of 3.6 consecutive days.

Therefore, the 3-day license does not cover the entire period, but the existing 7-day \$15 non-resident freshwater license would.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
