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**H. B. 2590**

(By Delegates Howell, Zatezalo, Ihle, Foster, Cadle, Kelly,  
Azinger, Hill, Faircloth, Stansbury and Summers)

[Introduced February 4, 2015 ; referred to the  
Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources then the Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §20-2-27 and §20-2-28 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, all relating to wildlife resources and providing that residents sixty-five years of age or older are not required to have a license to hunt, trap or fish during the legal seasons in West Virginia.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

That §20-2-27 and §20-2-28 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

**ARTICLE 2. WILDLIFE RESOURCES.**

**§20-2-27. Necessity for license.**

Except as otherwise provided by law, ~~no resident who has reached his or her fifteenth birthday and who has not reached his or her sixty-fifth birthday before January 1, 2012,~~ and no nonresident shall at any time take, hunt, pursue, trap for, kill or chase any wild animals, wild birds, or fish for, take, kill or catch any fish, amphibians or aquatic life of any kind whatsoever in this state without first having secured a license or permit and then only during the respective open seasons,

1 except that a nonresident who has not reached his or her fifteenth birthday may fish for, take, kill or  
2 catch any fish, amphibians or aquatic life of any kind whatsoever in this state without first having  
3 secured a license or permit. A person under the age of fifteen years shall not hunt or chase any wild  
4 animals or wild birds upon lands of another unless accompanied by a licensed adult.

5 A resident or nonresident member of any club, organization or association or persons owning  
6 or leasing a game preserve or fish preserve, plant or pond in this state shall not hunt or fish therein  
7 without first securing a license or permit as required by law: *Provided*, That resident landowners  
8 or their resident children, or bona fide resident tenants of land, may, without a permit or license, hunt  
9 and fish on their own land during open seasons in accordance with laws and rules applying to such  
10 hunting and fishing unless the lands have been designated as a wildlife refuge or preserve.

11 Licenses and permits shall be of the kinds and classes set forth in this article and shall be  
12 conditioned upon the payment of the fees established for the licenses and permits.

13 **§20-2-28. When licenses or permits not required.**

14 Persons in the following categories are not required to obtain licenses or permits as indicated:

15 (a) Bona fide resident landowners or their resident children, or resident parents, or bona fide  
16 resident tenants of the land may hunt, trap or fish on their own land during open season in  
17 accordance with the laws and rules applying to the hunting, trapping and fishing without obtaining  
18 a license, unless the lands have been designated as a wildlife refuge or preserve.

19 (b) Any bona fide resident of this state who is totally blind may fish in this state without  
20 obtaining a fishing license. A written statement or certificate from a duly licensed physician of this  
21 state showing the resident to be totally blind shall serve in lieu of a fishing license and shall be  
22 carried on the person of the resident at all times while he or she is fishing in this state.

1 (c) All residents of West Virginia on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States  
2 of America, while on leave or furlough, may hunt, trap or fish in season in West Virginia without  
3 obtaining a license. Leave or furlough papers shall serve in lieu of any license and shall be carried  
4 on the person at all times while trapping, hunting or fishing.

5 (d) ~~In accordance with the provisions of section twenty-seven of this article,~~ Any resident  
6 sixty-five years of age or older ~~before January 1, 2012,~~ is not required to have a license to hunt, trap  
7 or fish during the legal seasons in West Virginia, but in lieu of the license the person shall at all  
8 times while hunting, trapping or fishing carry on his or her person a valid West Virginia driver's  
9 license or nondriver identification card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles.

10 (e) Except as otherwise provided for in this section, residents of states that share river borders  
11 with the State of West Virginia who carry hunting or fishing licenses valid in that state may hunt or  
12 fish without obtaining licenses, but the hunting or fishing shall be confined to the fish and waterfowl  
13 of the river proper and not on its tributaries: Provided, That the state shall first enter into a reciprocal  
14 agreement with the director extending a like privilege of hunting and fishing to licensed residents  
15 of West Virginia without requiring the residents to obtain that state's hunting and fishing licenses.

16 (f) Residents of the state of Ohio who carry hunting or fishing licenses valid in that state may  
17 hunt or fish on the Ohio River or from the West Virginia banks of the river without obtaining  
18 licenses, but the hunting or fishing shall be confined to fish and waterfowl of the river proper and  
19 to points on West Virginia tributaries and embayments identified by the director: *Provided,* That  
20 the state of Ohio shall first enter into a reciprocal agreement with the director extending a like  
21 privilege of hunting and fishing from the Ohio banks of the river to licensed residents of West  
22 Virginia without requiring the residents to obtain Ohio hunting and fishing licenses.

1 (g) Any resident of West Virginia who was honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of  
2 the United States of America and who receives a veteran's pension based on total permanent service-  
3 connected disability as certified to by the Veterans Administration may hunt, trap or fish in this state  
4 without obtaining a license. The director shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance  
5 with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code setting forth the procedure for  
6 the certification of the veteran, manner of applying for and receiving the certification and  
7 requirements as to identification while the veteran is hunting, trapping or fishing.

8 (h) Any disabled veteran who is a resident of West Virginia and who, as certified to by the  
9 Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, is eligible to be exempt from the payment of any fee on account  
10 of registration of any motor vehicle owned by the disabled veteran as provided in section eight,  
11 article ten, chapter seventeen-a of this code shall be permitted to hunt, trap or fish in this state  
12 without obtaining a license. The director shall propose rules for legislative approval in accordance  
13 with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code setting forth the procedure for  
14 the certification of the disabled veteran, manner of applying for and receiving the certification and  
15 requirements as to identification while the disabled veteran is hunting, trapping or fishing.

16 (i) Any resident or inpatient in any state mental health, health or benevolent institution or  
17 facility may fish in this state, under proper supervision of the institution involved, without obtaining  
18 a fishing license. A written statement or certificate signed by the superintendent of the mental health,  
19 health or benevolent institution or facility in which the resident or inpatient, as the case may be, is  
20 institutionalized shall serve in lieu of a fishing license and shall be carried on the person of the  
21 resident or inpatient at all times while he or she is fishing in this state.

22 (j) Any resident who is developmentally disabled, as certified by a physician and the Director

1 of the Division of Health, may fish in this state without obtaining a fishing license. As used in this  
2 section, "developmentally disabled" means a person with a severe, chronic disability which:

3 (1) Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or a combination of mental and physical  
4 impairments;

5 (2) Is manifested before the person attains age twenty-two;

6 (3) Results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of  
7 major life activity:

8 (A) Self-care;

9 (B) Receptive and expressive language;

10 (C) Learning;

11 (D) Mobility;

12 (E) Self-direction;

13 (F) Capacity for independent living; and

14 (G) Economic self-sufficiency; and

15 (4) Reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of care, treatment or  
16 supportive services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and  
17 coordinated.

18 (k) A student eighteen years of age or younger receiving instruction in fly fishing in a public,  
19 private, parochial or Christian school in this state may fly fish in the state for catch and release only  
20 without obtaining a fishing license while under the supervision of an instructor authorized by the  
21 school.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide that residents sixty-five years of age or older are not required to have a license to hunt, trap or fish during the legal seasons in West Virginia.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.