



New York State Conservation Council Inc.
8 East Main Street, Ilion, New York 13357-1899

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT IF AMENDED

Provision of free or reduced cost hunting, fishing and trapping licenses to disabled persons.

This proposal would enable disabled persons to obtain sporting licenses free or at reduced cost. While under existing statutes there are exemptions from some licensing requirements for persons with disabilities, they are limited.

The NYSCC recognizes the desirability of making the state's natural resources available to all its citizens. Eliminating fees to maximize use by disabled persons is certainly an appropriate objective. The state is obligated, however, to recognize the loss of income and ensure that it is shared across the general population.

The negative impact of waivers of sporting license fees on the Conservation Fund is of singular concern to the NYSCC. This is a dedicated account funded by license fees and committed to the state's fish and wildlife conservation efforts.

License sales are also one of the factors that determine the state's share of federal excise tax funds under the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. These allocations are based, in part, on the number licenses actually sold; free licenses are excluded.

From both law enforcement and accounting perspectives, the state should pay the fees which it does not collect from the recipient using monies appropriated from the General Fund. This assures that the cost is clearly identified and that it is shared across the full tax base and not borne solely by the entity providing the service.

The Council supports these bills only if licenses are purchased from funds external to the Conservation Fund.

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