

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. Senate Bill 67

PRINTER NO. 1802

AMOUNT

See Fiscal Impact

FUND

Game Fund
Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account

DATE INTRODUCED

February 21, 2023

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Laughlin

DESCRIPTION

Senate Bill 67 amends Title 34 (Game) to change the composition of the of Pennsylvania Game Commission to include one commissioner representing the interest of agricultural commodities and to make several other changes, including removing the prohibition on Sunday hunting.

The change to the composition of the commission includes ensuring that one member of the commission represents the interest of agricultural commodities that pertain to normal agricultural operation and wildlife.

The legislation will also change requirements that allow a farmer to remove nuisance animals on their property when they are damaging crops by streamlining the process to allow farmers to transport wildlife to a processor and self-report the harvest.

The bill also removes the prohibition on Sunday hunting and authorizes the Pennsylvania Game Commission (commission) to include more Sunday hunting opportunities. Currently, Sunday hunting is approved for hunting on three specific Sundays (1 day archery, 1 day rifle and 1 day of the commission’s choice).

Senate Bill 67 also strengthens trespassing penalties for those caught trespassing on private property while engaged in hunting activities. The violations include upgraded penalties in an effort to deter future violations. Additionally, hunting privileges may be revoked for repeat offenders.

Lastly, the legislation requires the commission to create an agriculture access permit list to connect landowners with wildlife property damages to vetted hunters or trappers looking to gain permission to access private property. This list will be broken down by county, and for a hunter to be eligible, the hunter must be over the age of 18 and have no previous hunting violations in the past seven years. The commission will hold the list and will provide it to landowners at their request.

This act shall take effect in 60 days.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

The Pennsylvania Game Commission anticipates that expanding Sunday hunting will result in additional licenses being sold, which will result in additional revenue to the Game Fund.

Strengthening the trespassing penalties for violators has the potential for increased fines. A person convicted of a misdemeanor of the first degree may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years and/or be required to pay a fine not exceeding \$10,000. A person convicted of a felony of the third degree may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not more than seven years and/or be required to pay a fine not exceeding \$15,000.

Using the Department of Corrections' minimum marginal cost of \$44.12 per inmate/per day for less than 300 inmates, the Commonwealth will incur additional annual costs of approximately \$16,104 for each inmate, or \$80,519 for every five defendants sentenced to a State Correctional Institution.

Additional revenue to be deposited into the Judicial Computer System Augmentation Account will be dependent upon the number of fines collected by the courts.