



Department of Natural Resources Testimony – 2013 AB 633

Assembly Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage, January 29, 2014, 10:01 AM, 417 North (GAR Hall)

Linda Olver, Administrative Policy Advisor
Bureau of Customer and Outreach Services
Department of Natural Resources

Subject: AB 633 - Eligibility of persons with disabilities to receive annual fishing licenses at reduced fees

Good morning Chairman Ott and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 633, which amends the eligibility criteria required to purchase an annual fishing license at a reduced fee. Today I am testifying for informational purposes on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources.

Under current law, a resident of this state is eligible for an annual fishing license at a reduced fee if the person applying for the license:

- 1) Produces evidence showing that he or she is receiving social security or other federal disability benefits
- 2) Is a veteran receiving federal disability compensation for a non-service-related disability
- 3) Produces a certificate from a licensed physician or optometrist stating that his or her sight is impaired to the degree that he or she cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses

AB 633 would help to alleviate an incongruity under current law and allow residents who qualify for a Class A, long-term Class B, Class C or Class D disabled permit to purchase a reduced fee annual fishing license. For example, a resident unable to ambulate and who utilizes a wheelchair would qualify for a Class A disabled permit that includes trolling privileges and yet may not be receiving social security or other federal disability benefits, be visually impaired, nor be a veteran receiving disability benefits. This resident Class A disabled permit holder who is authorized to troll due to their disabilities would not meet the eligibility criteria in current law and would not qualify to purchase a reduced fee annual fishing license referenced in statute as an "Annual Fishing License for Disabled Persons". Again, AB 633 would help to alleviate this incongruity under current law where a customer is eligible for a disabled permit that authorizes trolling and yet not eligible for a reduced rate disabled fishing license.

This legislation aligns all classes of DNR disabled permits, so that resident holders of a Class A, Class C or Class D disabled permit and resident holders of a Class B disabled permit issued for a period greater than one year would be eligible to purchase an annual fishing license at a reduced fee, as long as the disabled permit will not expire before the end of the effective period of the annual fishing license. Under AB 633, a certificate from a physician or optometrist stating an individual's sight is impaired to the degree that he or she cannot read ordinary newspaper print with or without corrective glasses would no longer qualify a person to receive an annual fishing license at a reduced fee. Instead, the bill allows a resident holder of a Class C permit to be eligible for an annual fishing license at a reduced fee as long as the permit will not expire before the end of the effective period of the annual fishing license. DNR must issue a Class C permit to any applicant who is legally blind.

Approximately 11,000 residents hold valid Class A, B, C, and D disabled permits issued by the department. Of the 11,000 resident disabled permit holders, approximately 1,600 purchased the reduced fee annual fishing license during the 2013 license year under the current eligibility criteria established under law. The amended eligibility criteria under this bill would make more residents with disabilities eligible to purchase an annual fishing license at a reduced rate. It is also possible the reduced fee may entice some resident disabled permit holders who had not

