



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #564

Warden Radios (DNR -- Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation)

Bill Agency

[LFB 2007-09 Budget Summary: Page 408, #4]

CURRENT LAW

Department of Natural Resources conservation wardens use radios for daily field operations, including contacting local and state patrol dispatchers. Compatible radio equipment allows reciprocal operations with the State Patrol and local law enforcement agencies (primarily county sheriffs or local police officers).

GOVERNOR

Provide \$218,000 in 2007-08 and \$215,300 in one-time funding in 2008-09 to purchase new radios for conservation wardens.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. One-time funding to purchase radios would be provided as follows:

	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Conservation Fund		
ATV Account	\$11,100	\$10,900
Boat Registration Account	25,900	25,600
Fish and Wildlife Account	165,300	163,300
Water Resources Account	2,700	2,700
Environmental Fund	10,000	9,800
Recycling Fund	<u>3,000</u>	<u>2,900</u>
Total	\$218,000	\$215,200

2. The 2005-07 budget provided funding of \$63,600 in 2005-06 and \$127,200 from the recycling, environmental and conservation funds for the first two years of a master lease to purchase new radios for conservation wardens. Wardens utilize both mobile (vehicle-mounted) and portable (hand-held) radios on a daily basis. At the time, total costs to replace both mobile and portable radio units for 200 wardens (400 total radios) were estimated at approximately \$632,800 over an anticipated five-year master lease. However, the Department did not purchase as many radios as they had proposed. Further, they did not purchase the same model of radio as they had identified in 2005. The models originally identified were not compliant with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's interoperability standards. In summer 2005, the manufacturer introduced a new model of both the mobile and portable radios, which met the interoperability standards. The new model allows wardens to communicate in digital as well as analog mode, which allows wardens to converse with other state, local, and federal public safety officers. The Department secured a Homeland Security grant for 100 of these radios (50 mobile and 50 portable). DNR then purchased an additional 70 mobile and 120 portable units with state funds. This resulted in a total of 120 mobile and 170 portable radios, instead of the proposed 200 of each type envisioned in the 2005-07 budget. Additionally, the Department purchased 120 vehicle chargers and 120 extra batteries for the portable radios. The following table illustrates the difference in price (excluding interest) between the originally proposed radios and the radios that the Department actually purchased.

Cost Comparison: Radios Requested vs Radios Purchased

<u>Budgeted Radio</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
Mobile	\$1,400	200	\$280,000
Portable	900	200	<u>180,000</u>
Total			\$460,000
<u>Radio purchased</u>			
Mobile	\$2,400	70	\$168,000
Portable	1,960	120	<u>235,200</u>
Total			\$403,200 *

*DNR also acquired an additional 100 radios (50 mobile and 50 portable) through a Homeland Security grant.

3. Of the amount provided under the bill, \$123,600 in 2007-08 and \$118,600 in 2008-09 would be used to complete the master lease payments that began in the 2005-07 biennium for 70 mobile radios and 120 portable radios.

4. The remaining \$94,400 in 2007-08 and \$96,600 in 2008-09 would be used toward the payment of the first two years of an expected three-year master lease for an additional 100 mobile radios and 50 portable radios (for a total of 220 of each type) to supply all conservation wardens with comparable radio equipment. The Department estimates that the total cost of the three-year master lease will be approximately \$341,800. The Department anticipates paying approximately \$105,400 in 2007-08 and \$107,600 in 2008-09 (approximately \$11,000 per year would be absorbed by base resources in the Bureau of Law Enforcement). The remaining \$128,800 would need to be requested in 2009-10.

5. The Department currently has 208 credentialed conservation warden positions, with 196 positions currently filled. Therefore, it could be argued that 196 radios may be adequate. However, the Department plans to hire a warden recruit class of 15 in 2008. Additionally, DNR argues that spare radios are needed in case of irreparable damage to a radio. One alternative could be to provide the Department with funding for 95 mobile radios and 45 portable radios (for a total of 215 of each type). This would reduce costs by \$10,900 each year and provide all active wardens and anticipated recruits with radios, and allow for several spare radios in case of damage.

6. If some retirements or vacancies occur over the next two years providing 205 of each radio may be adequate. This would result in a reduction of \$32,700 each year to the bill. Further, this would be more consistent with the need identified in 2005-07 (200 of each).

ALTERNATIVES TO BILL

1. Adopt the Governor's recommendation to provide one-time funding of \$218,000 in 2007-08 and \$215,200 in 2008-09 to purchase new radios for conservation wardens.

ALT 1	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
SEG	\$0	\$433,200

2. Adopt the Governor's recommendation, except delete \$10,900 each year, to provide a total of 215 of each radio.

ALT 2	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
SEG	-\$21,800	\$411,400

3. Adopt the Governor's recommendation, except delete \$32,700 each year, to provide 205 of each radio.

ALT 3	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
SEG	-\$65,400	\$367,800

4. Delete provision.

ALT 4	Change to Bill Funding	Change to Base Funding
SEG	-\$433,200	\$0

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