

Agriculture and Wildlife

See full summary documents for additional detail

H597 - Wildlife Resources Commission Amends. (SL 2019-204)

S.L. 2019-204 makes the following changes to the Wildlife Resources Commission's (WRC) laws, licenses, and fees:

- Requires the owner of a vessel registered with the WRC to place a WRC issued validation decal on both sides of the vessel, along with the vessel's identification number.
- Makes technical changes to definitions relating to resources, and adds definitions for "Mountain Heritage Trout Waters," "Public Mountain Trout Waters," and "Wildlife Resources Commission Property."
- Allows a person holding a trophy sale permit to sell permanently preserved bears or tanned bear hides and permanently preserved turkeys or turkey parts.
- Allows a person holding a Resident Disabled Veteran Lifetime Unified Sportsman/Coastal Recreational Fishing License to keep that license even if the licensee becomes less than 50% disabled.
- Makes conforming changes to refer to "investment income" of the Wildlife Endowment Fund, as opposed to only interest income.
- Makes all licenses, permits, stamps, and certifications valid from the date of issue for a period of 12 months, unless indicated otherwise.
- Allows WRC to establish fees for all licenses, permits, stamps, and certifications, except the Recreational Commercial Gear License, and round those fees up to the next whole dollar based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers.
- Creates new WRC licenses, modifies or recodifies several existing WRC licenses and increases numerous WRC license fees.
- Makes conforming changes to the Sportsman Licenses to exclude trapping and to allow access to and use of WRC property.
- Requires a trapper to include on any steel jaw, leghold, or conibear trap either the trapper's name and address or the trapper's WRC-issued identification number and the phone number for WRC's hotline to report wildlife violations.
- Gives WRC inspectors and protectors jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of Article 19B of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes, concerning plant protection and conservation.
- Adds a representative of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners to the Beaver Damage Control Advisory Board, and removes the Director of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension from that same Board.
- Changes the Beaver Management Assistance Program enrollment dates for counties and increases the fee to participate in the Program from \$4,000 to \$6,000.
- Makes various changes to the statutes concerning regulation of venomous reptiles, large constricting snakes, and crocodilians.
- Clarifies the scope of "an area" with regard to turkey hunting with bait as being within 300 yards of any place in which bait has been placed, and requires a knowing mental state for a violation.
- Allows an eligible volunteer firefighter who has served for at least five consecutive years to obtain a lifetime hunting or fishing license for a fee amount equal to half of the applicable fee amount.

Sections 1 through 6 of this act became effective September 1, 2019. Sections 7 and 12 of this act became effective October 1, 2019. Section 9 becomes effective January 1, 2020. Section 10 of this act became effective December 1, 2019, and applies to offenses committed after that date. The remainder of this act became effective August 27, 2019.

H758 - MSD Expansion and Governance/DACS Study. (SL 2019-127)

S.L. 2019-127 requires expansion of a metropolitan sewerage district in certain limited circumstances and upon the Environmental Management Commission finding that the inclusion of the new territory would not adversely affect customer service in the district and would preserve and promote the public health and welfare of the district; and directs the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study wildlife enhancement, invasive species control, and native habitat restoration on properties managed by the State.

This act became effective July 19, 2019.

S77 - Ag Disaster Fund/Certain Counties. (SL 2019-3)

S.L. 2019-3 provided an opportunity for farmers in a county that, between January 31, 2019, and February 15, 2019, was designated under a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration, to apply for recovery under the Hurricane Florence Agriculture Disaster Program of 2018.

This act became effective March 8, 2019, and expired on the date that the Department processed all applications validly received during the ten business day application period.

S553 - Regulatory Reform Act of 2019. (Ratified)

Senate Bill 553 would amend several State laws as follows:

- Raise the dollar threshold for contracts exempted from the conflict-of-interest prohibition for public employees benefitting from public contracts from \$40,000 to \$60,000 for goods and services that are not medically related.
- Direct the Building Code Council to amend the Building Code and Plumbing Code for certain regulations concerning drinking fountains and water closets.
- Direct the Building Code Council to amend the Fire Prevention Code to allow certain doorstep garbage and recycling containers.
- Require all occupational licensing boards with continuing education requirements to study and report on any available options for online continuing education.
- Exempt Onslow and Rockingham Counties from the list of counties required to conduct vehicle emissions testing.
- Create a process for counties to permit temporary event venues in certain situations.
- Require NC Pre-K operators to provide parents with information pertaining to public and private school choices in their county or any other county.
- Clarify landfill life-of-site franchise requirements.
- Repurpose pre-regulatory landfill funds.
- Direct the Department of Environmental Quality to study and report on express permitting expansion for certain programs.
- Extend the deadline for Coastal Area Management Act Emergency General Permits authorized in response to Hurricanes Florence and Michael to October 12, 2019, with all work to be completed by October 12, 2020.
- Provide additional criteria for determining priority for grants from the Wastewater Reserve or the Drinking Water Reserve.

- Amend the septic tank site suitability determination process.
- Establish a process to identify and assess distressed public water and wastewater systems and create a Viable Utility Fund within the Department of Environmental Quality to be used to assist distressed systems to become self-sustaining.
- Expand the architectural license exemption for small commercial projects.
- Direct the Department of Revenue to provide information to the Revenue Laws Study Committee concerning the property taxation of outdoor signs.
- Require that electric membership cooperatives and their subsidiaries comply with applicable notice, safety, and permitting requirements when constructing or maintaining broadband lines.
- Authorize cities to require that manufactured homes be installed in accordance with certain standards, but prohibit cities from requiring masonry curtain walls or skirting being installed on manufactured homes on land leased to the homeowner.
- Authorize the Division of Motor Vehicles to issue a limited registration plate to a vehicle owner in certain situations.
- Require that the State Board of Elections certify voting systems only if a performance bond or letter of credit has been posted.
- Allow a dealer to sell, without a safety inspection, a salvage-titled vehicle in certain circumstances.
- Direct the Division of Motor Vehicles to study whether the laws governing salvage vehicles should be revised to protect consumers from unsafe vehicles.
- Allow the sale of alcoholic beverages at certain stadiums.
- Direct the Division of Emergency Management within the Department of Public Safety to study the needs of law enforcement and first responders to improve access to the interstate system.
- Make technical changes to the statutes governing the North Carolina Board of Architecture and the criteria necessary to sit for the architecture licensure exam.
- Add aquaculture to the uses that may be made of flood hazard areas without a permit.
- Clarify that proof of mailing is sufficient proof of notice for certain insurance policy or renewal cancellations by the insurer.
- Allow the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to use funds appropriated to it to provide a non-federal match for any project that has been or will be approved for funding by the USDA Emergency Watershed Protection Act.

This bill was vetoed by the Governor on September 20, 2019, has not been overridden by the General Assembly, and, therefore, has not become law.