

Legislative Analysis



EXEMPT VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM RECREATION PASSPORT FEE

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 6219 as introduced

Sponsor: Rep. Denise Mentzer

Committee: Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation

Complete to 12-5-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 6219 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) to allow a Michigan resident who is an honorably discharged military veteran or actively serving in a branch of the military to enter a state park without needing to purchase a recreation passport for their vehicle if they obtain a hangtag, sticker, or other type of form that identifies their vehicle as being owned by a veteran or active duty military personnel.

The item would have to be displayed in a manner determined by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) would have to verify a resident's status as an honorably discharged veteran or actively serving military member upon the resident's request. After verification, DMVA would have to issue the resident with a hangtag, sticker, or other type of form agreed to by the DNR for purposes of these provisions. The hangtag or sticker would also allow its holder to enter a state recreation area or state-operated public boat launch without having to pay for a recreation passport.

Finally, the bill would also allow anyone to use a state-operated public boating access site where there is an opportunity to fish on a day that the DNR has designated as a Free Winter Fishing Day or Free Fishing Day without needing to pay for the recreation passport.

MCL 324.74116 and 324.78119

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 6219 is likely to reduce revenue for the Department of Natural Resources by expanding exemptions to the recreation passport requirement for state park facilities. Honorably discharged resident veterans and resident active-duty military personnel are not exempted from the recreation passport requirement at present. The present number of recreation passports sold to these military veterans and active-duty personnel is unclear, consequently the potential lost revenue is uncertain. The sale of recreation passports generated \$42.4 million in revenue for FY 2022-23. This revenue is received by both the Department of State and the DNR, where it supports state park operations, maintenance, capital outlay projects, local public recreation, and forest recreation. The bill is unlikely to affect departmental costs or local government costs or revenues.

The bill would create modest costs for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs that would likely be absorbed by existing appropriations. The fiscal impact to the department would depend on the number of military service verification requests submitted under the provisions

of the bill, as well as the costs incurred from issuing documentation to eligible veterans or active-duty military members

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