

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 16, 2025

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 23, 2025

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 28, 2025

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 26, 2025

SENATE BILL

No. 718

Introduced by Senators Dahle and Allen

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Jeff Gonzalez, Celeste Rodriguez, and Tangipa)

February 21, 2025

An act to amend, repeal, and add Section 7150 of, and to add and repeal Sections 712.2 and 3033.2 of, the Fish and Game Code, relating to fish and wildlife.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 718, as amended, Dahle. Hunting and sport fishing licenses: reduced fees.

Existing law requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement and administer various wildlife protection and habitat conservation programs and to enforce the state's hunting and fishing laws. Existing law requires the department to issue hunting licenses that authorize the take of birds and mammals, and sport fishing licenses that authorize the take of fish, reptiles, or amphibians, in accordance with prescribed laws. Existing law sets the fees for those licenses at specified rates and requires those fees to be adjusted annually for inflation. Existing law requires the department to issue reduced fee hunting and sport fishing licenses to specified individuals, as provided.

This bill would require the department, until January 1, 2031, to issue 2032, to issue, beginning no later than January 1, 2027, a reduced fee

hunting license to a qualified recipient who is a resident of the state and has not been convicted of a violation of the Fish and Game Code and has provided adequate documentation to the department, as specified. ~~department.~~ The bill would prohibit the department from providing a reduced fee hunting license to a person unless the department is satisfied that the person provided adequate documentation of eligibility. The bill would also require the department, until January 1, 2031, 2032, to issue reduced fee sport fishing licenses in accordance with these provisions. The bill would require the Director of Fish and Wildlife to submit a report to the Legislature on or before October 1, 2029, that evaluates the effect of the reduced fee for hunting and sport fishing licenses, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 712.2 is added to the Fish and Game
2 Code, to read:
3 712.2. (a) On or before October 1, 2029, the director shall
4 submit a written report to the Legislature that evaluates the effect
5 of the reduced fee for hunting and sport fishing licenses issued
6 pursuant to Sections 3033, 3033.2, and 7150.
7 (b) The report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall
8 include all of the following information:
9 (1) Information regarding sales of reduced fee licenses pursuant
10 to Sections 3033, 3033.2, and 7150 and use of free licenses
11 pursuant to 7151.
12 (2) The cost to the department and the commission from
13 administering and implementing the reduced fee and free licenses
14 and any additional programs provided solely to holders of these
15 licenses.
16 (3) Evidence of any changes in participation by those who had
17 and had not previously purchased sport fishing or hunting licenses
18 before becoming eligible for the reduced fee or free license.
19 (4) Any other relevant information at the discretion of the
20 director.
21 (c) For purposes of the report required pursuant to this section,
22 the director shall collect all relevant, appropriate, and sufficient
23 data necessary to evaluate the effect of the reduced fee licenses to

1 sportfishing and hunting participation in the state, including
2 information about data collection and enforcement costs. Data
3 collection efforts pursuant to this subdivision shall avoid
4 duplication and use data collected for other purposes, to the extent
5 feasible.

6 (d) (1) The report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (a)
7 shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the
8 Government Code.

9 (2) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this
10 section is inoperative on October 1, 2033, and, as of January 1,
11 2034, is repealed.

12 SEC. 2. Section 3033.2 is added to the Fish and Game Code,
13 to read:

14 3033.2. (a) Pursuant to this section, the department ~~shall~~ *shall*,
15 *beginning no later than January 1, 2027*, issue to a qualified
16 recipient, who is a resident of the state and has not been convicted
17 of a violation of this code, a reduced fee hunting license that
18 authorizes the licensee to take a bird or mammal as authorized by
19 this code and regulations adopted pursuant to this code.

20 (b) The license fee for a reduced fee hunting license shall be
21 the same amount as the license fee required for a license issued
22 pursuant to Section 3033.

23 (c) (1) A person applying for a reduced fee hunting license
24 pursuant to this section shall submit adequate documentation to
25 the department to determine whether the person is, in fact, eligible
26 for a reduced fee hunting license.

27 (2) The department shall not provide a reduced fee hunting
28 license to a person unless it is satisfied that the person has provided
29 adequate documentation of eligibility for that license.

30 (3) The commission shall adopt regulations to establish which
31 material demonstrates ~~eligibility for the programs~~ *receipt of public*
32 *benefits under a program* described in ~~paragraph (1) of subdivision~~
33 (d).

34 ~~(d) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have~~
35 ~~the following meanings:~~

36 ~~(1) “Adequate documentation” means material demonstrating~~
37 ~~eligibility for any of the following programs:~~

38 ~~(A) Medicaid or MediCal.~~

39 ~~(B) The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.~~

~~(C) The California Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children.~~

~~(D) CalFresh or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.~~

~~(E) The federal Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF) grant program.~~

~~(F) A tribal Head Start program.~~

~~(G) Supplemental Security Income.~~

~~(H) MediCal for Families (Healthy Families A and B).~~

~~(I) The federal National School Lunch Program.~~

~~(J) The federal Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance program.~~

~~(2) “Qualified recipient” means a person eligible for either of the following:~~

~~(A) The California Alternative Rates for Energy program.~~

~~(B) The Family Electric Rate Assistance program.~~

~~(d) For purposes of this section, “qualified recipient” means a person who is receiving public benefits under one or more of the following programs:~~

~~(1) The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Act (CalWORKs program) under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 11200) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or a federal Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF) grant program (Section 10553.25 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).~~

~~(2) The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Chapter 51 (commencing with Section 2011) of Title 7 of the United States Code).~~

~~(e) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2031, 2032, and as of that date is repealed.~~

SEC. 3. Section 7150 of the Fish and Game Code is amended to read:

7150. (a) Upon application to the department’s headquarters office in Sacramento and payment of a base fee of four dollars (\$4), as adjusted pursuant to Section 713, the following persons, who have not been convicted of any violation of this code, shall be issued a reduced fee sport fishing license that is valid for one year as specified in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 7149.05 and that authorizes the licensee to take any fish, reptile, or amphibian anywhere in this state as otherwise authorized

1 pursuant to this code and regulations adopted pursuant to this code
2 for purposes other than profit:

3 (1) A disabled veteran having a 50 percent or greater
4 service-connected disability upon presentation of proof of an
5 honorable discharge from military service and proof of the
6 disability. Proof of the disability shall be by certification from the
7 United States Department of Veterans Affairs or by presentation
8 of a license issued pursuant to this paragraph in the preceding
9 license year.

10 (2) A member of the military who is a “recovering service
11 member” pursuant to paragraph (7) of Section 1602 of the federal
12 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (10
13 U.S.C. Sec. 1071 note). A person shall be eligible for a reduced
14 fee sport fishing license pursuant to this paragraph upon the
15 submission of a letter, online or in hardcopy, to the department
16 from that person’s commanding officer or from a military medical
17 doctor stating that the person is a recovering service member.

18 (3) A person over 65 years of age who is a resident of this state
19 and who receives benefits pursuant to one of the following:

20 (A) Section 12200 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

21 (B) The Cash Assistance Program for Aged, Blind, and Disabled
22 Legal Immigrants (Chapter 10.3 (commencing with Section 18937)
23 of Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).

24 (4) A qualified recipient who is a resident of the state and
25 submits adequate documentation in accordance with Section
26 3033.2.

27 (b) A person applying for a reduced fee sport fishing license
28 shall submit adequate documentation for the department to
29 determine whether the applicant is, in fact, eligible for a reduced
30 fee sport fishing license. The documentation shall be in the form
31 of a letter or other document, as specified by the department, from
32 a public agency, except as provided in paragraphs (1), (2), and (4)
33 of subdivision (a). The department shall not issue a reduced fee
34 sport fishing license to any person unless it is satisfied that the
35 applicant has provided adequate documentation of eligibility for
36 that license.

37 (c) The adjustment of the base fee pursuant to Section 713
38 specified in subdivision (a) shall be applicable to the fishing license
39 years beginning on or after January 1, 1996.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, ~~2031~~, 2032, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 7150 is added to the Fish and Game Code, to read:

7150. (a) Upon application to the department's headquarters office in Sacramento and payment of a base fee of four dollars (\$4), as adjusted pursuant to Section 713, the following persons, who have not been convicted of any violation of this code, shall be issued a reduced fee sport fishing license that is valid for one year as specified in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subdivision (a) of Section 7149.05 and that authorizes the licensee to take any fish, reptile, or amphibian anywhere in this state as otherwise authorized pursuant to this code and regulations adopted pursuant to this code for purposes other than profit:

(1) A disabled veteran having a 50 percent or greater service-connected disability upon presentation of proof of an honorable discharge from military service and proof of the disability. Proof of the disability shall be by certification from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or by presentation of a license issued pursuant to this paragraph in the preceding license year.

(2) A member of the military who is a "recovering service member" pursuant to paragraph (7) of Section 1602 of the federal National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (10 U.S.C. Sec. 1071 note). A person shall be eligible for a reduced fee sport fishing license pursuant to this paragraph upon the submission of a letter, online or in hardcopy, to the department from that person's commanding officer or from a military medical doctor stating that the person is a recovering service member.

(3) A person over 65 years of age who is a resident of this state and who receives benefits pursuant to one of the following:

(A) Section 12200 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(B) The Cash Assistance Program for Aged, Blind, and Disabled Legal Immigrants (Chapter 10.3 (commencing with Section 18937) of Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).

(b) A person applying for a reduced fee sport fishing license shall submit adequate documentation for the department to determine whether the applicant is, in fact, eligible for a reduced fee sport fishing license. The documentation shall be in the form of a letter or other document, as specified by the department, from

1 a public agency, except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2) of
2 subdivision (a). The department shall not issue a reduced fee sport
3 fishing license to any person unless it is satisfied that the applicant
4 has provided adequate documentation of eligibility for that license.

5 (c) The adjustment of the base fee pursuant to Section 713
6 specified in subdivision (a) shall be applicable to the fishing license
7 years beginning on or after January 1, 1996.

8 (d) This section shall become operative on January 1, ~~2031~~.
9 2032.

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