

Subject Electronic Licensing System

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Date March 19, 2024

Overview

This bill makes a number of changes to state law to allow the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement a new electronic licensing system (ELS). A law passed last session required the DNR to offer electronic game and fish licenses by March 1, 2026. The DNR is anticipating that a new system that will meet these requirements will be available by March 5, 2025. The changes become effective upon full implementation of the new ELS.

Summary

Section	Description
1	Procedure for adopting exempt rules; duration. Technical.
2	Electronic transactions. Removes a provision allowing the DNR to assign a number to a person buying a hunting or fishing license that serves as a temporary authorization that will no longer be needed under the new system.
3	Electronic licensing system data. Changes references to snowmobile trail sticker to snowmobile trail pass.
4	Application. Removes a requirement that an application for a wild rice dealer's license be made under a written oath.
5	Refunds. Technical.
6	Refunds. Technical.

Section	Description
7	Pass required; fee. Changes snowmobile trail sticker to snowmobile trail pass.
8	Nontrail use registration. Strikes references to sticker for purposes of the snowmobile trail pass.
9	Refunds. Technical.
10	Snowmobile state trail pass. Changes references to snowmobile trail sticker to snowmobile trail pass and removes requirement that it be affixed to the snowmobile and instead requires it to be available for inspection.
11	Money deposited in account. Changes references to snowmobile trail sticker to snowmobile trail pass.
12	Purposes; allocation. Changes references to snowmobile trail sticker to snowmobile trail pass.
13	Refunds. Technical.
14	Pass in possession. Removes reference to signed cross-country-ski passes as they will no longer be required to be signed under changes made in the next section.
15	Issuance. Removes requirement that cross-country-ski passes be signed.
16	Skiing without a pass. Removes reference to signed cross-country-ski passes as they will no longer be required to be signed under changes made in the previous section.
17	Issuance. Removes requirement that horse passes be signed.
18	Refunds. Technical.

Section	Description
19	Bonus permit. Modifies the definition of “bonus permit” for purposes of the game and fish laws to remove reference to deer tags.
20	Validation. Defines “validation” for purposes of the game and fish laws to allow documentation to be either electronic or on paper.
21	Electronic devices. States that if a person uses an electronic device to display a document to a conservation officer or peace officer as part of an inspection under the game and fish laws, the conservation officer/peace officer is not liable for any damage to the device unless the officer does not exercise due care. Also states that it does not constitute consent for the officer to access other contents on the device.
22	Joint and several liability. Allows invalidation of a license revoked and seized.
23	Personal possession. Removes references to paper licenses no longer necessary.
24	Duplicate licenses. Removes the requirement that an applicant take an oath covering the facts of loss or destruction of a license prior to issuance of a duplicate license.
25	Replacement deer licenses. Removes a requirement that a person submit their original deer license and unused tags when being issued a replacement license.
26	Replacement turkey licenses. Removes a requirement that a person submit their original turkey license and unused tags when being issued a replacement license.
27	Seizure or invalidation of licenses. Allows game and fish licenses to be invalidated (in addition to seized as allowed under current law) when the person violates the game and fish laws.
28	License system. Allows the DNR to publish a notice in the State Register exempting residents and nonresidents from requirements to possess a license to take game or fish in the event of a disruption to the availability of hunting and angling licenses.

Section	Description
29	Resident lifetime licenses authorized. Removes references to deer tags no longer needed under the new system.
30	Lifetime small-game-hunting license; fee. Removes reference to turkey stamp validations.
31	Lifetime deer-hunting license; fee. Removes reference to deer tags no longer needed under the new system.
32	Lifetime sporting license; fee. Removes reference to turkey stamp validations.
33	Lifetime sporting with spearing option license; fee. Removes reference to turkey stamp validations.
34	Nonresident lifetime small-game-hunting license; fee. Removes reference to turkey stamp validations.
35	License applications; penalty. Removes a requirement that game and fish license applications be made in writing.
36	Licenses to be sold and issuing fees. Removes a provision allowing the DNR to issue one-day angling licenses in books of ten to fishing guides operating charter boats.
37	Validation required. Requires validation rather than tags to possess or transport deer, bear, elk, or moose.
38	Registration required. Removes reference to tag requirements being removed in the previous section.
39	Quartering deer allowed. Removes references to deer tags no longer needed under the new system.
40	Transporting by person other than licensee. Requires a person other than the licensee transporting deer, bear, elk, or moose to have documentation (rather than a tag) with certain licensee information.

Section	Description
41	Registration. Removes requirements to have tags for special fish species and instead requires an endorsement and for the fish to be registered.
42	Venison donations. Requires a person donating venison to supply the licensee's DNR number (rather than a tag).
43	Bear license required; application. Removes requirement that an application for a bear license be made on a form.
44	Taking small game by party. Removes reference to turkey tags no longer needed under the new system.
45	Registration. Removes tagging requirements for prairie chickens for purposes of DNR rule authority.
46	License required to take turkey; registration requirements. Removes turkey tagging requirements and replaces them with validation requirements for purposes of DNR's rulemaking authority.
47	Special fish management registration. Allows for special fish management endorsement and registration (rather than tags).
48	Aquatic invasive species affirmation. Removes a requirement that the aquatic invasive species affirmation portion of a nonresident angling license be signed.
49	License required. Removes the requirement that a dark house, fish house, or shelter have the license tag attached to it.
50	Required rulemaking. Allows the DNR to use the good cause exemption to adopt rules to conform to this act.
51	Repealer. Repeals Minn. Stat. § 97A.015, subd. 27a. (definition of "license identification number") and § 97A.485, subd. 13 (requirement to allow one-day paper fishing licenses to be sold by fishing guides operating charter boats).

Section	Description
52	Effective date. States that sections 1 to 51 are effective upon full implementation of the replacement ELS.



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