



Attn: House Committee on Agriculture and Conservation
Re: House Bill 3677
Date: March 6, 2023
Position: Recommend Amendment

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Conservation,

I write you today on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation to express a suggested amendment to House Bill 3677, which, as written, would decrease revenue from fishing license sales and thereby decrease conservation funding on which the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) relies. I respectfully request the members of this Committee to oppose the passage of this bill.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

The Illinois DNR is supported by the unique “user pays – public benefits” structure of the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). Along with excise taxes on outdoor sporting goods, the DNR relies on revenue derived from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses to carry out its function of managing the many fish and wildlife populations of Illinois. Decreasing revenue streams for the DNR is detrimental to not only the State’s fish and wildlife populations, but to the sportsmen and women that pursue them, as well.

House Bill 3677 would create five-year hunting and fishing licenses at a discounted rate for residents, and at an even greater discounted rate for seniors and veterans. While CSF understands and appreciates the desire to provide incentives for residents to purchase licenses and benefits for seniors and veterans, we respectfully ask this Committee to consider amending the bill to also include specific language that creates a reimbursement to the Illinois DNR from the general fund for any license provided by the legislature going forward. This will retain the opportunity to provide these incentives without unduly threatening the ability of the DNR to receive the funding necessary to continue its work managing Illinois’ public trust fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of all Illinoisians.

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

I respectfully urge the members of this Committee to amend HB 3677 to reimburse the DNR for lost revenue from discounted license sales. This would ensure that residents, seniors, and veterans can receive the benefits that the Legislature seeks to provide while safeguarding the American System of Conservation Funding and the DNR's ability to perform its duties. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Robert Matthews

Senior Coordinator, Great Lakes States

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

rmatthews@congressionalsportsmen.org | 517-210-2890