

Agenda Item 5

Hunter Education Deferral

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Wildlife Program**

Hunter Education Program

- Hunter Education required for WA hunters born after January 1, 1972
- WDFW certifies $\approx 13,000$ students/year
- The Hunter Ed curriculum is delivered by 950 volunteer instructors



WDFW Hunter Education Division

- 11 full/part time staff
 - ≈ 7 FTEs on Hunter Ed
- Olympia: Administration, customer service, instructor support, warehouse
- 6 Field Coordinators; 1/Region
 - ≈ 4 FTEs of hunter ed coordination
 - Part-time, full-time, volunteer coordination work

WDFW Hunter Education Division

- Investments in Field Coordinators, 2013-2015:
 - 22% ↑ in # certified instructors (currently 950)
 - 31% ↑ in # new instructors (>100 in 2015)
 - 15% ↑ in instructor volunteer hours donated (>27,000)
 - 19% ↑ in # classes offered (724 in 2015)
 - 1.3% ↓ in annual no-show rate (currently 15%)

Hunter Education Deferral Program

- Deferral program began in 2007
- RCW 77.32.155
- WAC 232-12-228
- Authorizes once-in-a-lifetime, 1-license year deferral from hunter education

Purpose of the Hunter Ed Deferral

- Concept of “try before you buy”
- Reduce / eliminate perceived barrier to hunting
- Fall classes can be difficult to get into
- 35 other states have similar programs



Deferral Requirements

- Deferred Hunter
 - At least 10 years old
 - Has not have failed hunter education course in prior 12 months



Deferral Requirements

- Accompanying Hunter
 - Over 18 years old
 - WA licensed hunter (non-deferred)
 - Held WA hunting license the prior 3 years
 - Maintain unaided visual and auditory communication w/ deferred hunter
 - Can supervise only one deferred hunter



Deferral Numbers

- 700–950 deferrals/year
- Average 840/year
- Peak numbers in August – November
- 2015:
 - 711 deferrals (lowest ever)
 - $\approx 33\%$ ↓ from 2013-2015
 - 1st year w/ no complaints to Director's Office re: lack of classes



Proposed Rule Changes

- No policy changes
- Eliminate an outdated administrative process
- Enable improved customer service
- Result in decreased administrative costs



Proposal - Major Customer Benefits

- Easier, faster application process
- Decreased time to obtain deferral
- Additional / easier payment option
- Can purchase license at same time from Licensing
- Can purchase license from any dealer
- Elimination of deferral card & replacements

Proposal - Major Agency Benefits

- Reduction in number of walk-in applicants
- Auto-fill form & database entry = error reduction
- Reduced application processing time
- Reduced check & cash handling
- Reduced costs for materials and mailing
- Potential increased license sales

Proposal Efficiencies

Generalized Number of Steps, Application to License Purchase		
	Customer	WDFW
Current System	4 - 8	6
Proposed System	4 (easier, faster)	3 (easier, faster)

Summary of Public Comments

- 44 public comments
 - 77% pro/neutral, 23% con
- 24 (54%) supported the proposed changes
 - Common sense improvements, streamlining, increasing cost effectiveness & customer service
- 10 (23%) did not support
 - Hunter ed & firearm safety should be required prior to hunting, eliminate the deferral but discount licenses
- 10 (23%): No comment, no knowledge of the deferral, did not support hunting in general
- WDFW not proposing adjustments

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Questions?

