

Drafting Number:	LLS 15-0600	Date:	February 5, 2015
Prime Sponsor(s):	Rep. Willett	Bill Status:	House SVMA
	Sen. Scott	Fiscal Analyst:	Clare Pramuk (303-866-2677)

BILL TOPIC: HUNTING & TAKING BLACK BEARS & WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Fiscal Impact Summary*	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017		
State Revenue				
Cash Funds		Reduction.		
State Expenditures				
FTE Position Change				
Appropriation Required: None.				

* This summary shows changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year.

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, it is illegal to hunt or take black bears between March 1 and September 1. This bill changes this period to November 1 through July 31 and establishes a general-purpose hunt that begins on August 1 and ends on August 31 each year. The Parks and Wildlife Commission (PWC) in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) may authorize a hunt at any time between September 1 and October 31 of each calendar year. The bill specifically excludes a liquid scent that smells like food from the definition of bait. The use of bait to take a black bear is prohibited under current law.

Background

The PWC currently authorizes a black bear hunt from September 2 to mid-November annually. There are an estimated 16,000 to 18,000 black bears statewide and Colorado Parks and Wildlife's (CPW) annual harvest objective is 1,400 bears statewide. CPW sells approximately 15,500 licenses annually (85 percent to residents and 15 percent to nonresidents) for a total of \$1,350,000 in revenue to the Wildlife Cash Fund. During the 2013 season, approximately 70 percent of licenses were sold (15,154 out of 21,226 available). Hunters have about a 9 percent success rate in harvesting black bears during the current hunting season.

State Revenue

Assumptions. The following assumptions are used in this fiscal note.

- The black bear harvest success rate will increase due to the use of liquid scent and because in August bears are engaged in pre-den hyper-feeding behavior and more vulnerable.
- CPW's annual harvest target will remain at 1,400.

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This bill is expected to result in a reduction in revenue to the Wildlife Cash Fund beginning in FY 2016-17. The CPW monitors the number of black bears taken during hunting season and are expected to adjust the number of licenses that will be offered based on the new harvest success rates produced as a result of this bill. This can be accomplished by issuing fewer licenses per hunt or by limiting the optional hunts between September 1 and October 31. By whatever means the number of licenses are reduced, the result will be a reduction in license revenue to the Wildlife Cash Fund. The amount cannot be determined until the bill has been implemented and data are collected on harvest success rates, so a reduction in revenue is not anticipated until FY 2016-17.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect August 5, 2015, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 6, 2015, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Natural Resources