

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the General Government Appropriations Committee

**BILL:** CS/CS/SB 2150

**INTRODUCER:** General Government Appropriations Committee, Environmental Conservation and Preservation Committee, and Senator Bennett

**SUBJECT:** Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

**DATE:** April 15, 2009      **REVISED:** \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Hennigan</u>	<u>Kiger</u>	<u>EP</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>DeLoach</u>	<u>DeLoach</u>	<u>GA</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:**

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE.....  Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS.....  Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

**I. Summary:**

This bill directs the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (commission) to create a voluntary \$2 contribution check-off option on all recreational activity licenses issued under Part VI chapter 379, Florida Statutes, for the purpose of providing funds to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc. This entity is a non-profit organization located in Palmetto, Florida, and the contributions will be used to breed, raise, and train guide dogs for the blind.

This bill creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes.

**II. Present Situation:**

Part VI of ch. 379, F.S., details the duties of the commission regarding the issuance of recreational licenses. Specific recreational licenses found in these provisions are:

- Sportsman, which includes hunting, freshwater and saltwater fishing licenses, wildlife management area, archery, muzzleloading gun, crossbow, turkey, Florida waterfowl, snook and lobster permits.

- Hunting, which includes hunting license, wildlife management area, archery, muzzleloading gun, crossbow, turkey and Florida waterfowl permits.
- Freshwater Fishing.
- Saltwater Fishing.

Each license the commission provides may be issued for an annual, five-year, or lifetime term. Costs of licenses are:

- Sportsman – \$100 annual/\$1,001.50 lifetime (five-year is not available).
- Hunting – \$17 annual/\$77.50 five-year/\$501.50 lifetime.
- Freshwater Fishing – \$17 annual/\$77.50 five-year/\$301.50 lifetime.
- Saltwater Fishing – \$17 annual/\$77.50 five-year /\$301.50 lifetime.

The specific license fees are established by the Legislature, and the revenues are deposited in various trust funds utilized by the commission.

Sales of the licenses are handled by the commission through a variety of outlets. These are: county tax collectors; sporting goods stores; and other retailers that may sell hunting or fishing gear over the internet and by phone. The commission has outsourced the licensing programming.

### **Check-off Option**

Presently, the commission does not have a voluntary contribution check-off option listed on their recreational activity licenses for Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc. However, as authorized in s. 379.352(13), F.S., the commission allows residents and nonresidents to make a donation of \$5 or any amount to any commission-run programs such as hunting and fishing. In Fiscal Year 2007-08, approximately 19 percent (22,475 individuals) chose to donate to youth hunting and fishing programs at the time they purchased a recreational license. In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the commission collected \$100,233 in youth hunting and fishing donations from 22,475 individuals. A comparison between Fiscal Years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 for July 1 through February 28 indicates that donations have decreased by approximately 10 percent during this period. If this trend continues, future collections may be reduced.

The commission uses an outsourced vendor to manage their license sales and donations. The cost reported by the vendor for adding a check-off box is \$0.90 per license sold. Presently, the commission's vendor has waived the transaction fee for the youth hunting and fishing donations since the commission encourages the purchase of lifetime licenses. While the vendor has waived the fee for youth hunting and fishing donations, the vendor has indicated that they would not continue to do so for other donations in the future.

Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., established in 1982 and located in Palmetto, Florida, is one of only 13 guide dog schools in the United States to be certified by the National Association of Guide Dog Users. It is the only one located in the Southeastern United States. The next nearest guide dog school to Florida is located in Texas, making Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., the only guide dog option for residents of Florida.

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

**Section 1** creates a provision directing the commission to create a voluntary contribution option of \$2 for Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., on all recreational activity licenses issued under Part VI of ch. 379, F.S. Funds raised from the contribution are to be distributed quarterly by the commission to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., for the purposes of breeding, raising, and training guide dogs for the blind. The commission is directed to retain 90 cents from each contribution to cover administrative costs.

**Section 2** provides that the bill will take effect July 1, 2009.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

Applicants for recreational licenses would have an option to donate \$2 by selecting a check-off on the form. It is unknown how many individuals would voluntarily contribute.

The bill will generate revenue for the Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc. The commission estimates approximately 22,000 donations from the check-off option, totaling \$44,000 annually. Based on the costs incurred by the vendor, the net donation to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., is estimated to be \$19,140 (\$44,000 less \$24,860) annually.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The direct cost the commission will have to pay to their vendor is 90 cents for every \$2 donated to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc. The commission is directed to retain 90 cents from each contribution to cover administrative costs. The actual cost per unit, which includes the cost of administrative staff incurred by the commission, is \$1.13 for every \$2 donated to Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.

The commission estimates donations to the Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., will be approximately \$44,000 annually. Given their unit cost of \$1.13 for every \$2 donated, the commission anticipates spending \$24,860 annually to implement the bill. However, 80 percent of these costs, or an estimated \$19,800, will be recovered by the administrative fee.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS/CS by General Government Appropriations on April 15, 2009:**

The committee substitute authorizes the commission to retain 90 cents from each contribution in order to cover administrative costs. The remaining amount is distributed on a quarterly basis to the Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc., in Palmetto, FL for the purpose of breeding, raising, and training guide dogs for the blind.

**CS by Environmental Preservation and Conservation on March 24, 2009:**

The committee substitute increases the voluntary contribution check-off option on all recreational activity licenses from \$1 to \$2.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.