

PERMANENT ELECTRONIC DUCK STAMP ACT OF 2013

MAY 17, 2013.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington, from the Committee on Natural Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1206]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1206) to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 1206 is to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On March 16, 1934, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. Under this law, every hunter over the age of 16 is required to purchase a Federal duck stamp each year if he or she wants to hunt migratory waterfowl. The price of a duck stamp has increased from \$1 to the present cost of \$15. Since the inception of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has collected more than \$800 million from the sale of duck stamps. These monies, deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, have been used to purchase or lease over 6 million acres of land at a total purchase price of over \$1 billion for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Federal Duck Stamp Office has indicated that 98 percent of the dollars deposited in the Fund is used for wetland acquisition. The remaining 2 percent is spent on the printing and distribution of the stamps.

The duck stamp receipts have varied each year because of changes in waterfowl population levels, bag limits and economic conditions. The number of duck stamps sold has declined, however, from 2.5 million per year in 1971–1972 to 1.5 million stamps per year in 2011–2012. During that year, \$22 million was deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

The Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–266) directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a three-year pilot program that would allow up to 15 States to issue electronic Federal migratory bird hunting stamps. Those states that choose to participate in the program were permitted to charge a reasonable fee to recover their administrative costs. In the past ten years, state electronic hunting and fishing licenses have become popular throughout the United States. They are easy to obtain because a potential hunter or angler can simply use his or her personal computer to access the appropriate state fish and wildlife department website and within a matter of moments are printing a document.

The electronic pilot program began in the 2007–2008 hunting year and is currently in its sixth year. There are currently eight states (Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Texas and Wisconsin) where an individual can obtain a Federal duck stamp in an electronic form. Since its inception, more than 3.5 million stamps have been purchased in this manner. These stamps are valid for 45 days from the date of purchase.

Under P.L. 109–266, FWS is required to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot program to determine whether it has been cost-effective and a convenient means for issuing migratory bird hunting and conservation stamps. This report was submitted to Congress in August 2011 and concluded: “The E-Stamp Program has proven to be a practical method that is readily accepted by the stamp-buying public. The increased sale of E-Stamps, coupled with few complaints about the process through the three-year pilot, suggests customers are satisfied with this method of acquiring their Duck Stamps and the options available to them in their States.”

This legislation will permanently allow FWS to authorize certain states to sell the annual Federal Duck Stamp.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1206 was introduced on March 14, 2013, by Congressman Robert Wittman (R–VA). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs. On April 24, 2013, the Full Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered, and the bill was then adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation. Clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(2)(B) of that Rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. Under clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 1206—Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013

H.R. 1206 would authorize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to permanently allow any state to provide hunting and conservation stamps for migratory birds (referred to as federal duck stamps) electronically. The electronic stamps would remain valid for 45 days to allow for the physical stamps to arrive in the mail. A pilot program that authorized a limited number of states to issue electronic stamps expired in 2010, although the USFWS has continued the program under other authorities.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1206 would affect direct spending and revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Under current law, amounts collected from the sale of duck stamps are deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and are available to be spent without further appropriation for waterfowl conservation projects. CBO estimates that the net effects of enacting the bill would be insignificant for each year and over the 2014–2023 period because the legislation would not have a significant impact on the number of federal duck stamps purchased.

H.R. 1206 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Martin von Gnechten. The estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

2. Section 308(a) of Congressional Budget Act. As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures. Under current law, amounts collected from the sale of duck stamps are deposited in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and are available to be spent without further appropriation for waterfowl conservation projects. CBO estimates that the net effects of enacting the bill would be insignificant for each year and over the 2014–2023 period because the legislation would not have a significant impact on the number of federal duck stamps purchased.

3. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objec-

tive of this bill is to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

COMPLIANCE WITH H. RES. 5

Directed Rule Making. The Chairman does not believe that this bill directs any executive branch official to conduct any specific rule-making proceedings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any State, local or tribal law.

CHANGE IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.

