
DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 6 Reengrossed

2024 Regular Session

Ventrella

Present law (LAC 76:V.131) provides for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program permitting and operations. Present law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(4)) provides for permit requirements for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program, and requires completion of a course certified by the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Proposed law requires that department approved courses be readily available online, with completion subject to an interactive test.

Present law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(6)) allows for inspection of an applicant's animal housing facilities by the LDWF. Proposed law provides that an applicant must have a suitable housing for the animal and must report the habitat specifications to the department, and that permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by the LDWF upon twenty-four hours notice to the WRP applicant. Proposed law provides that the department may only inspect an applicant once per lifetime of the permit except where there is probable cause of a violation of wildlife or criminal law.

Proposed law provides that individuals may possess in captivity any sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife if they have satisfied the course requirements of present law and a licensed veterinarian has determined that the animal is medically non-releasable or exhibits signs of adjusted life in captivity and poses minimum zoonotic potential. Specifies that wildlife included under this exemption will be limited to the following species: (1) squirrel, (2) skunk, (3) opossum, (4) raccoon, (5) rabbit, or (6) chipmunk, with such possession limited to one animal per individual. Proposed law provides that individuals in possession of one of these animals will be held strictly liable for any damages for injuries to persons or property caused by the animal.

(Amends LAC 76:V.131(E)(4) and (6); Adds LAC 76:V.131(D)(3))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment to the original bill:

1. Establish an exemption to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program Permit, in which an individual may possess in captivity sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife if they have satisfied the course requirements of the program and have a licensed veterinarian certify that the animal is medically non-releasable. Further specifies that these animals are limited to squirrel, skunk, opossum, raccoon, rabbit, or chipmunk, with possession limited to one animal per individual. Individuals will also be strictly liable for any damages to persons or property caused by the animal.

2. Require at least one department approved course readily available online, which may require completion of an interactive test. Further require the department post approved courses on its website by January 1, 2025. Additionally provide that any wildlife rehabilitation courses developed or administered by the LDWF are subject to a fee of \$50.
3. Restore provisions related to submission of a Statement of Veterinary Support.
4. Provide that permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by the LDWF upon sufficient notice to the WRP applicant.
5. Restore provisions related to submission of a written request for extension of possession of an animal after 120 days.
6. Make technical changes.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Specify that the required inspection by the department does not apply if wildlife is possessed under the Section of proposed law.
2. Remove a fee requirement for any wildlife rehabilitation course developed or administered by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
3. Clarify that permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by the LDWF upon twenty-four hours of notice to the WRP applicant, instead of upon sufficient notice.
4. Specify that the department may only inspect a WRP applicant once per the lifetime of a permit, except where there is probable cause of a violation of wildlife or criminal law.