



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

June 25, 2010

The Honorable Robert W. Harrell, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Mr. Speaker and Members of the House:

I am hereby vetoing and returning without my approval H. 3541, R. 346, which creates a new bear tag that hunters must purchase in order to hunt bear. This bill also allows bear hunting in Game Zones 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and revises the open season for deer in Game Zone 1. Because this bill increases the bear hunting fee and the administrative burden associated with hunting licenses, we are vetoing this legislation.

Throughout this administration, we have supported the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the valuable work that DNR's employees and law enforcement officers do to serve the citizens of South Carolina. Although we recognize that administering the state's hunting regulations involves significant expense, we are vetoing H. 3541 because of the new fee increases imposed on hunters.

Currently, licensed hunters who want to hunt bears are required to buy a \$12 hunting license and a \$6 big game permit. H. 3541 creates a new requirement that, in addition to the hunting license and big game permit, hunters must also purchase a bear tag for \$25 (\$100 for non-South Carolina residents). Finally, this bill requires hunters who want to hunt bears in Game Zones 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 to participate in a bear tag lottery, which will cost another \$10.

We appreciate that this bill's fee increase is intended to support the state's wildlife management efforts, and the bear population in particular. Although we recognize the state's role in preserving wildlife populations, we do not think this program should be funded by increased fees. As we stated in response to other fee increase proposals, we do not believe it is wise to effectively raise taxes and fees to cover budget shortfalls for core government services. At the start of the next legislative session, policymakers will begin crafting a "stimulus free" budget that is more than \$1 billion less than the proposed budget for FY 2011. We simply cannot sustain the state's budget on fee increases. Additionally, even if DNR sold 300 bear tags, the agency would raise only \$7,500 – far short of the amount needed to administer this program. We

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recommend that DNR reallocate its existing funding to support this program instead of increasing hunting license fees.

For these reasons, I am vetoing and returning without my approval H. 3541, R. 346.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Sanford', written in a cursive style.

Mark Sanford