

SENATE, No. 1839

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator PARKER SPACE

District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Clarifies that Fish and Game Council has sole authority to regulate freshwater fishing, hunting, and trapping.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning the Fish and Game Council, the Division of
2 Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Environmental
3 Protection, amending various parts of the statutory law, and
4 supplementing Title 23 of the Revised Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

8

9 1. Section 25 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-23) is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 25. All of the functions, powers and duties of the Division of
12 Fish and Game of the existing State Department of Conservation,
13 **【of the Fish and Game Council therein,】** and of the State
14 Commissioner of Conservation relating to or administered through
15 **【said】** that division, herein transferred to the Department of
16 Conservation and Economic Development, are hereby assigned to,
17 and shall be exercised and performed through, the Division of Fish
18 and Game in the department.

19 (cf: P.L.1948, c.448, s.25)

20

21 2. Section 26 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-24) is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 26. There shall be within , but not of, the Division of Fish **【,**
24 **Game】** and Wildlife, a Fish and Game Council which shall consist
25 of 11 members, each of whom shall be chosen with due regard to
26 **【his】** the member's knowledge of and interest in the conservation of
27 fish and game. Each member of the council shall be appointed by
28 the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Three of
29 **【such】** the members shall be farmers, recommended to the
30 Governor for appointment to the council by the agricultural
31 convention held pursuant to the provisions of article 2 of chapter 1
32 of Title 4 of the Revised Statutes; six of **【such】** the members shall
33 be sportsmen, recommended to the Governor for appointment to the
34 council by the New Jersey State Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs;
35 one of **【such】** the members shall be the **【chairman】** chairperson of
36 the committee established pursuant to section 7 of **【the**
37 **"Endangered】** "The Endangered and Nongame Species
38 Conservation 【Act" (P.L.1973, c.309; C.23:2A-7)】 Act," P.L.1973,
39 c.309 (C.23:2A-7) , and one of **【such】** the members shall be a
40 person knowledgeable in land use management and soil
41 conservation practices. One of **【such】** the farmer representatives
42 and two of **【such】** the sportsmen representatives in the council shall
43 be chosen from among residents of any of the following counties--
44 Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren; one of

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】 in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 **【such】** the farmer representatives and two of **【such】** the sportsmen
2 representatives in the council shall be chosen from among residents
3 of any of the following counties--Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex,
4 Monmouth, Ocean, Somerset and Union; and one of **【such】** the
5 farmer representatives and two of **【such】** the sportsmen
6 representatives shall be chosen from among residents of any of the
7 following counties--Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May,
8 Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem.

9 Each member of the council shall be appointed for a term of **【4】**
10 four years and shall serve until his successor has been appointed
11 and has qualified.

12 (cf: P.L.1979, c.199, s.72)

13

14 3. Section 29 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-27) is amended to
15 read as follows:

16 29. The Division of Fish and **【Game】** Wildlife shall be under
17 the immediate supervision of a director, who shall be a person with
18 special training and experience in **【wild life】** wildlife management
19 and otherwise qualified to direct the work of **【such】** the division.
20 The director of **【such】** the division shall be appointed by the Fish
21 and Game Council, subject to the approval of the Governor, and
22 shall, unless sooner removed by the Governor as hereinafter
23 provided, serve at the pleasure of **【such】** the council and until the
24 director's successor is appointed and has qualified. **【He】** The
25 director shall receive such salary as shall be provided by law.

26 The director shall administer the work of **【such】** the division
27 under the direction and supervision of the commissioner , except,
28 with respect to implementation of the State Fish and Game Code
29 and any comprehensive policies concerned therewith adopted or
30 formulated by the Fish and Game Council, the director shall be
31 under the direction of the Fish and Game Council.

32 (cf: P.L.1948, c.448, s.29)

33

34 4. Section 30 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-28) is amended to
35 read as follows:

36 30. a. In addition to its powers and duties otherwise hereinafter
37 provided in sections 31 through 41 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-29
38 et al.) , the Fish and Game Council shall, subject to the approval of
39 the commissioner, formulate comprehensive policies for the
40 protection and propagation of fish, birds, and game animals and for
41 the propagation and distribution of food fish and for the keeping up
42 of the supply thereof in the waters of the State. No such approval
43 of the commissioner shall be required with respect to the
44 formulation of any comprehensive policies concerning the State
45 Fish and Game Code adopted pursuant to sections 31 through 41 of
46 P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-29 et al.) or with respect to the
47 implementation of the State Fish and Game Code by the Division of

1 Fish and Wildlife, the division director, the Department of
2 Environmental Protection, and the commissioner as directed by the
3 council.

4 b. The council shall also:

5 **【a.】** (1) Consult with and advise the commissioner and director
6 of the Division of Fish and **【Game】** Wildlife with respect to the
7 work of such division.

8 **【b.】** (2) Study the activities of the Division of Fish and
9 **【Game】** Wildlife and hold hearings with respect thereto as it may
10 deem necessary or desirable.

11 **【c.】** (3) Report to the Governor and the Legislature annually,
12 and at such other times as it may deem in the public interest, with
13 respect to its findings and conclusions.

14 (cf: P.L.1948, c.448, s.30)

15

16 5. Section 31 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-29) is amended to
17 read as follows:

18 31. As used in this article, unless otherwise specifically
19 indicated:

20 **【**"Division" means the Division of Fish and Game in the
21 Department of Conservation and Economic Development.

22 "Council" means the Fish and Game Council in the Division of
23 Fish and Game of the Department of Conservation and Economic
24 Development.**】**

25 "Code" means the State Fish and Game Code **【.】** ;

26 "Council" means the Fish and Game Council in but not of the
27 Division of Fish and Wildlife; and

28 "Division" means the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the
29 Department of Environmental Protection.

30 (cf: P.L.1948, c.448, s.31)

31

32 6. Section 32 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-30) is amended to
33 read as follows:

34 32. For the purpose of providing an adequate and flexible
35 system of protection, propagation, increase, control and
36 conservation of fresh water fish, game birds, game animals, and fur-
37 bearing animals in this State, and for their use and development for
38 public recreation and food supply, the council is hereby authorized
39 and empowered to determine under what circumstances, when and
40 in what localities, by what means and in what amounts and numbers
41 such fresh water fish, game birds, game animals, and fur-bearing
42 animals, or any of them, may be pursued, taken, killed, or had in
43 possession so as to maintain an adequate and proper supply thereof,
44 and may, after first having determined the need for such action on
45 the basis of scientific investigation and research, adopt and from
46 time to time amend and repeal such appropriate and reasonable
47 regulations concerning the same, or any of them, penalties for the

1 violation of which are prescribed by certain of the sections of Title
2 23 of the Revised Statutes amended herein, as it deems necessary to
3 preserve, properly utilize or maintain the best relative number of
4 any species or variety thereof, at the times, in the manner and to the
5 extent hereinafter provided. The regulations so established shall be
6 called the State Fish and Game Code.

7 The council shall be the sole authority in determining whether or
8 not any species of fresh water fish, game bird, game animal, or fur-
9 bearing animal may be pursued, taken, killed, or had in possession
10 and in determining what circumstances, when and in what localities,
11 by what means and in what amounts and numbers those species may
12 be pursued, taken, killed, or had in possession. As directed by the
13 council, the division, the division director, the Department of
14 Environmental Protection, and the Commissioner of Environmental
15 Protection shall implement the State Fish and Game Code as
16 adopted by the council and any comprehensive policies concerned
17 therewith as formulated by the council.

18 (cf: P.L.1948, c.448, s.32)

19

20 7. Section 7 of P.L.1970, c.33 (C.13:1D-4) is amended to read
21 as follows:

22 7. a. All the functions, powers and duties of the Division of
23 Fish and Game of the existing Department of Conservation and
24 Economic Development, **[of the Fish and Game Council therein,]**
25 and of the Division of Shell Fisheries of the existing Department of
26 Conservation and Economic Development, and of the Shell
27 Fisheries Council therein, and of the Commissioner of Conservation
28 and Economic Development relating to, or administered through
29 **[said]** those divisions, are transferred to and vested in the Division
30 of Fish, Game and Shell Fisheries established hereunder.

31 b. The Fish and Game Council, together with all of its
32 functions, powers and duties, is continued as the Fish and Game
33 Council in but not of the Division of Fish, Game and Shell Fisheries
34 in the Department of Environmental Protection. This act shall not
35 affect the terms of office of the present members of the council.
36 The members of the council shall continue to be appointed as
37 provided by existing law.

38 c. The Shell Fisheries Council, together with all of its
39 functions, powers, and duties, is continued as the Shell Fisheries
40 Council in the Division of Fish, Game and Shell Fisheries in the
41 Department of Environmental Protection. This act shall not affect
42 the terms of office of the present members of the council. The
43 members of the council shall continue to be appointed as provided
44 by existing law.

45 (cf: P.L.1970, c.33, s.7)

46

47 8. Section 12 of P.L.1970, c.33 (C.13:1D-9) is amended to read
48 as follows:

1 12. The department shall formulate comprehensive policies for
2 the conservation of the natural resources of the State, the promotion
3 of environmental protection and the prevention of pollution of the
4 environment of the State. These comprehensive policies shall not
5 supersede or contradict the State Fish and Game Code as adopted
6 and implemented by the Fish and Game Council pursuant to
7 sections 31 through 41 of P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-29 et al.) or any
8 comprehensive policies concerned therewith formulated by the
9 council. The department shall in addition to the powers and duties
10 vested in it by this act or by any other law have the power to:

11 a. Conduct and supervise research programs for the purpose of
12 determining the causes, effects and hazards to the environment and
13 its ecology;

14 b. Conduct and supervise Statewide programs of education,
15 including the preparation and distribution of information relating to
16 conservation, environmental protection and ecology;

17 c. Require the registration of persons engaged in operations
18 which may result in pollution of the environment and the filing of
19 reports by them containing such information as the department may
20 prescribe to be filed relative to pollution of the environment, all in
21 accordance with applicable codes, rules or regulations established
22 by the department;

23 d. Enter and inspect any property, facility, building, premises,
24 site or place for the purpose of investigating an actual or suspected
25 source of pollution of the environment and conducting inspections,
26 collecting samples, copying or photocopying documents or records,
27 and for otherwise ascertaining compliance or noncompliance with
28 any laws, permits, orders, codes, rules and regulations of the
29 department. Any information relating to secret processes
30 concerning methods of manufacture or production, obtained in the
31 course of such inspection, investigation or determination, shall be
32 kept confidential, except this information shall be available to the
33 department for use, when relevant, in any administrative or judicial
34 proceedings undertaken to administer, implement, and enforce State
35 environmental law, but shall remain subject only to those
36 confidentiality protections otherwise afforded by federal law and by
37 the specific State environmental laws and regulations that the
38 department is administering, implementing and enforcing in that
39 particular case or instance. In addition, this information shall be
40 available upon request to the United States Government for use in
41 administering, implementing, and enforcing federal environmental
42 law, but shall remain subject to the confidentiality protection
43 afforded by federal law. If samples are taken for analysis, a
44 duplicate of the analytical report shall be furnished promptly to the
45 person suspected of causing pollution of the environment;

46 e. Receive or initiate complaints of pollution of the
47 environment, including thermal pollution, hold hearings in
48 connection therewith and institute legal proceedings for the

1 prevention of pollution of the environment and abatement of
2 nuisances in connection therewith and shall have the authority to
3 seek and obtain injunctive relief and the recovery of fines and
4 penalties in a court of competent jurisdiction;

5 f. Prepare, administer and supervise Statewide, regional and
6 local programs of conservation and environmental protection,
7 giving due regard for the ecology of the varied areas of the State
8 and the relationship thereof to the environment, and in connection
9 therewith prepare and make available to appropriate agencies in the
10 State technical information concerning conservation and
11 environmental protection, cooperate with the Commissioner of
12 Health and Senior Services in the preparation and distribution of
13 environmental protection and health bulletins for the purpose of
14 educating the public, and cooperate with the Commissioner of
15 Health and Senior Services in the preparation of a program of
16 environmental protection;

17 g. Encourage, direct and aid in coordinating State, regional and
18 local plans and programs concerning conservation and
19 environmental protection in accordance with a unified Statewide
20 plan which shall be formulated, approved and supervised by the
21 department. In reviewing such plans and programs and in
22 determining conditions under which such plans may be approved,
23 the department shall give due consideration to the development of a
24 comprehensive ecological and environmental plan in order to be
25 assured insofar as is practicable that all proposed plans and
26 programs shall conform to reasonably contemplated conservation
27 and environmental protection plans for the State and the varied
28 areas thereof;

29 h. Administer or supervise programs of conservation and
30 environmental protection, prescribe the minimum qualifications of
31 all persons engaged in official environmental protection work, and
32 encourage and aid in coordinating local environmental protection
33 services;

34 i. Establish and maintain adequate bacteriological, radiological
35 and chemical laboratories with such expert assistance and such
36 facilities as are necessary for routine examinations and analyses,
37 and for original investigations and research in matters affecting the
38 environment and ecology;

39 j. Administer or supervise a program of industrial planning for
40 environmental protection; encourage industrial plants in the State to
41 undertake environmental and ecological engineering programs; and
42 cooperate with the State Departments of Health and Senior
43 Services~~[,]~~ and Labor and Workforce Development, and the New
44 Jersey **【Commerce Commission】** Economic Development
45 Authority, in formulating rules and regulations concerning
46 industrial sanitary conditions;

47 k. Supervise sanitary engineering facilities and projects within
48 the State, authority for which is now or may hereafter be vested by

1 law in the department, and shall, in the exercise of such supervision,
2 make and enforce rules and regulations concerning plans and
3 specifications, or either, for the construction, improvement,
4 alteration or operation of all public water supplies, all public
5 bathing places, landfill operations and of sewerage systems and
6 disposal plants for treatment of sewage, wastes and other
7 deleterious matter, liquid, solid or gaseous, require all such plans or
8 specifications, or either, to be first approved by it before any work
9 thereunder shall be commenced, inspect all such projects during the
10 progress thereof and enforce compliance with such approved plans
11 and specifications;

12 l. Undertake programs of research and development for the
13 purpose of determining the most efficient, sanitary and economical
14 ways of collecting, disposing, recycling or utilizing **[of]** solid
15 waste;

16 m. Construct and operate, on an experimental basis, incinerators
17 or other facilities for the disposal of solid waste, provide the various
18 municipalities and counties of this State, and the Division of Local
19 Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs with
20 statistical data on costs and methods of solid waste collection,
21 disposal and utilization;

22 n. Enforce the State air pollution, water pollution,
23 conservation, environmental protection, solid and hazardous waste
24 management laws, rules and regulations, including the making and
25 signing of a complaint and summons for their violation by serving
26 the summons upon the violator and thereafter filing the complaint
27 promptly with a court having jurisdiction;

28 o. Acquire by purchase, grant, contract or condemnation, title
29 to real property, for the purpose of demonstrating new methods and
30 techniques for the collection or disposal of solid waste;

31 p. Purchase, operate and maintain, pursuant to the provisions of
32 this act, any facility, site, laboratory, equipment or machinery
33 necessary to the performance of its duties pursuant to this act;

34 q. Contract with any other public agency or corporation
35 incorporated under the laws of this or any other state for the
36 performance of any function under this act;

37 r. With the approval of the Governor, cooperate with, apply
38 for, and receive and expend funds from, the federal government, the
39 State Government, or any county or municipal government or from
40 any public or private sources for any of the objects of this act;

41 s. Make annual and such other reports as it may deem proper to
42 the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
43 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, evaluating the demonstrations
44 conducted during each calendar year;

45 t. Keep complete and accurate minutes of all hearings held
46 before the commissioner or any member of the department pursuant
47 to the provisions of this act. All such minutes shall be retained in a

1 permanent record, and shall be available for public inspection at all
2 times during the office hours of the department;

3 u. Require any person subject to a lawful order of the
4 department, which provides for a period of time during which such
5 person subject to the order is permitted to correct a violation, to
6 post a performance bond or other security with the department in
7 such form and amount as shall be determined by the department.
8 Such bond need not be for the full amount of the estimated cost to
9 correct the violation but may be in such amount as will tend to
10 insure good faith compliance with said order. The department shall
11 not require such a bond or security from any public body, agency or
12 authority. In the event of a failure to meet the schedule prescribed
13 by the department, the sum named in the bond or other security
14 shall be forfeited unless the department shall find that the failure is
15 excusable in whole or in part for good cause shown, in which case
16 the department shall determine what amount of said bond or
17 security, if any, is a reasonable forfeiture under the circumstances.
18 Any amount so forfeited shall be utilized by the department for the
19 correction of the violation or violations, or for any other action
20 required to insure compliance with the order;

21 v. Encourage and aid in coordinating State, regional and local
22 plans, efforts and programs concerning the remediation and reuse of
23 former industrial or commercial properties that are currently
24 underutilized or abandoned and at which there has been, or is
25 perceived to have been, a discharge, or threat of a discharge, of a
26 contaminant. For the purposes of this subsection, "underutilized
27 property" shall not include properties undergoing a reasonably
28 timely remediation or redevelopment process; and

29 w. Conduct research and implement plans and programs to
30 promote ecosystem-based management.

31 (cf: P.L.2007, c.288, s.6)

32

33 9. Section 21 of P.L.1970, c.33 (C.13:1D-18) is amended to
34 read as follows:

35 21. With respect to the functions, powers and duties hereby
36 transferred to the Department of Environmental Protection,
37 whenever in any law, rule, regulation, contract, document, judicial
38 or administrative proceeding or otherwise, reference is made to the
39 Department of Conservation and Economic Development, or the
40 commissioner thereof, the same shall mean and refer to the
41 Department of Environmental Protection and the Commissioner of
42 Environmental Protection, respectively.

43 With respect to the functions, power and duties of the
44 Department of Health and the commissioner thereof, which are
45 herein transferred and vested in the Division of Environmental
46 Quality established hereunder, whenever in any law, rule,
47 regulation, contract, document or otherwise, reference is made to
48 the Department of Health, or the commissioner thereof, the same

1 shall be deemed to mean and refer to the Department of
2 Environmental Protection and the Commissioner of Environmental
3 Protection, respectively.

4 Whenever the term "Division of Clean Air and Water" occurs or
5 any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
6 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Division of
7 Environmental Quality in the Department of Environmental
8 Protection established hereunder.

9 Whenever the term "Clean Air Council" occurs or any reference
10 is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the same shall be
11 deemed to mean or refer to the Clean Air Council in the Department
12 of Environmental Protection established hereunder.

13 Whenever the term "Clean Water Council" occurs or any
14 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
15 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Clean Water Council
16 in the Department of Environmental Protection established
17 hereunder.

18 Whenever the term, "Commission on Radiation Protection" or
19 any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
20 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Commission on
21 Radiation Protection in the Department of Environmental Protection
22 established hereunder.

23 Whenever the term "Division of Fish and Game" or "Division of
24 Shell Fisheries" occurs or any reference is made thereto in any law,
25 contract or document, the same shall be deemed to refer to the
26 Division of Fish **】, Game and Shell Fisheries】** and Wildlife
27 established hereunder.

28 Whenever the term "Director of Fish and Game" occurs or any
29 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
30 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Director of the
31 Division of Fish **】, Game and Shell Fisheries】** and Wildlife
32 established hereunder.

33 Whenever the term "Fish and Game Council" occurs or any
34 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
35 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Fish and Game
36 Council in but not of the Department of Environmental Protection
37 established hereunder.

38 Whenever the term "Shell Fisheries Council" occurs or any
39 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
40 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Shell Fisheries
41 Council in the Department of Environmental Protection established
42 hereunder.

43 Whenever the term "Director of Shell Fisheries" occurs or any
44 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
45 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Director of the
46 Division of Fish **】, Game and Shell Fisheries】** and Wildlife
47 established hereunder.

48 Whenever the term "Division of Resource Development" or

1 "Director of the Division of Resource Development" occurs or any
2 reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
3 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Division of Natural
4 Resources established hereunder and the director thereof,
5 respectively.

6 Whenever the term "Resource Development Council" or
7 "Planning and Development Council" occurs or any reference is
8 made thereto in any law, contract or document, the same shall be
9 deemed to mean or refer to the Natural Resource Council
10 established hereunder.

11 Whenever the term "Division of Parks, Forestry and Recreation"
12 occurs or any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or
13 document, the same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the
14 Division of Parks, Forestry and Recreation in the Department of
15 Environmental Protection established hereunder.

16 Whenever the term "Parks, Forestry and Recreation Council"
17 occurs or any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or
18 document, the same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Parks,
19 Forestry and Recreation Council in the Department of
20 Environmental Protection established hereunder.

21 Whenever the term "Division of Water Policy and Supply"
22 occurs or any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or
23 document, the same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the
24 Division of Water Policy and Supply in the Department of
25 Environmental Protection.

26 Whenever the term "Water Policy and Supply Council" occurs or
27 any reference is made thereto in any law, contract or document, the
28 same shall be deemed to mean or refer to the Water Policy and
29 Supply Council in the Department of Environmental Protection.

30 Whenever the term "Division of Economic Development" is
31 referred to in any law, contract or document, the same shall be
32 deemed to mean or refer to the Division of Economic Development
33 in the Department of Labor and Industry.

34 Whenever the term "Economic Development Council" is referred
35 to in any law, contract or document, the same shall be deemed to
36 mean or refer to the Economic Development Council in the
37 Department of Labor and Industry.

38 Whenever the term "Division of Veterans' Services" is referred
39 to in any law, contract or document, the same shall be deemed to
40 mean or refer to the organizational unit of the Department of
41 Institutions and Agencies to be established pursuant to section 13 of
42 this act.

43 Whenever the term "Veterans' Services Council" is referred to in
44 any law, contract or document, the same shall be deemed to mean or
45 refer to the Veterans Services Council in the Department of
46 Institutions and Agencies.

47 With respect to the functions, powers and duties of the
48 Department of Agriculture which are hereby transferred and vested

1 in the Division of Environmental Quality established hereunder,
2 whenever in any law, rule, regulation, contract, document or
3 otherwise reference is made to the Department of Agriculture, the
4 same shall mean and refer to the Department of Environmental
5 Protection established hereunder.
6 (cf: P.L.1970, c.33, s.21)

7
8 10. R.S.23:1-1 is amended to read as follows:

9 23:1-1. As used in this title:

10 "Apprentice license" means any resident's apprentice firearm
11 hunting license, resident's apprentice bow and arrow license,
12 nonresident's apprentice firearm hunting license, or nonresident's
13 apprentice bow and arrow license issued pursuant to R.S.23:3-4.

14 "Assistant protector" or "assistant fish and game protector"
15 means the Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Law Enforcement in the
16 division;

17 "Closed season" means the date and time of year when wildlife
18 may not be captured, taken, killed, or had in possession in the field;

19 "Code" means the State Fish and Game Code;

20 "Conservation officer" means any sworn, salaried member of the
21 Bureau of Law Enforcement in the division holding the titles of
22 Conservation Officer I, II, or III, and includes the titles of
23 Supervising Conservation Officer and Chief of the Bureau of Law
24 Enforcement;

25 "Council" means the Fish and Game Council in but not of the
26 Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department of Environmental
27 Protection;

28 "Delaware river" means the waters of the Delaware river from
29 the Pennsylvania shore to the New Jersey shore, or in the case of
30 any tributaries or inland bays on the New Jersey side, to the mouths
31 of those tributaries or bays;

32 "Deputy warden" or "deputy fish and game warden" means any
33 commissioned deputy conservation officer of the Bureau of Law
34 Enforcement in the division;

35 "Division," "Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife," "board," or
36 "Board of Fish and Game Commissioners" means the Division of
37 Fish and Wildlife in the Department of Environmental Protection;

38 "Fishing" means the possession of an instrument used to take fish
39 in a condition that makes the instrument readily usable, while in a
40 place or in proximity thereto where fish may be found;

41 "Hunting" means the possession of an instrument used to take
42 wildlife in a condition that makes the instrument readily usable,
43 while in a place or in proximity thereto where wildlife may be
44 found;

45 "Open season" means the date and time of year when wildlife
46 may be captured, taken, killed, or had in possession;

47 "Protector" or "fish and game protector" means the Chief of the
48 Bureau of Law Enforcement in the division;

1 "Warden" or "fish and game warden" means a conservation
2 officer; and

3 "Wildlife" means any wild mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian,
4 fish, mollusk, crustacean or other wild animal or any part, product,
5 egg or offspring or the dead body or parts thereof.

6 (cf: P.L.2015, c.83, s.1)

7

8 11. R.S.23:2-2 is amended to read as follows:

9 23:2-2. The duties of the **【board】** division shall be the
10 protection and propagation of fish, birds and game animals,
11 implementation of the State Fish and Game Code as adopted by the
12 Fish and Game Council pursuant to sections 31 through 41 of
13 P.L.1948, c.448 (C.13:1B-29 et al.) and of any comprehensive
14 policies concerned therewith as formulated by the council,
15 enforcement of the laws relating thereto, propagation and
16 distribution of food fish and the keeping up of the supply thereof in
17 the waters of the **【state】** State . The **【board】** division may close
18 streams or parts of streams for **【forty-eight】** 48 hours immediately
19 following the stocking **【of same】** thereof by the **【board】** division ,
20 and may revoke the license of any person who shall violate the
21 regulation so prescribed. The **【board】** division may permit persons,
22 when duly authorized by the **【board】** division , to carry firearms in
23 the woods and fields at any time when necessary for the
24 conservation of **【wild life】** wildlife. The **【board】** division shall
25 have the conduct and control of all hatching stations owned and
26 operated by the **【state】** State. It may investigate any complaint
27 made to it, at all times inspect any dam, weir, fish basket, net or
28 other illegal apparatus for taking fish, and forthwith remove the
29 same, and, on view or information, enforce the laws for the
30 protection and propagation of fish, birds and game animals in **【this**
31 **state】** the State, by arrest and prosecution of the offender, without
32 complaint or warrant. It shall make a full report to the **【legislature】**
33 Legislature annually, at its meeting, of all its official operations for
34 the year ending on June **【thirtieth】** 30 preceding, with any
35 suggestions and recommendations it deems useful.

36 (cf: R.S.23:2-2)

37

38 12. Section 1 of P.L.1948, c.39 (C.23:2-2.1) is amended to read
39 as follows:

40 1. Whenever pursuant to law the Governor shall, by
41 proclamation, close any forests, woodlands or open lands to entry,
42 and any open season for taking fish, game birds, game animals or
43 fur-bearing animals or any of them, shall have been suspended or
44 curtailed thereby, the Fish and Game Council, at the expiration of
45 the period of **【such】** that closure, may **【,** subject to the approval of
46 the State Commissioner of Conservation,**】** by order provide for a
47 new open season or for an extension of **【such】** the open season

1 curtailed, within the limits of the area affected by the Governor's
2 proclamation, for a period not exceeding that during which **[said]**
3 the open season was suspended or curtailed.
4 (cf: P.L.1948, c.39, s.1)
5

6 13. Section 74 of P.L.1979, c.199 (C.23:2B-15) is amended to
7 read as follows:

8 74. a. The Division of Fish, Game and Shellfisheries is
9 continued and constituted as the Division of Fish, Game and
10 Wildlife in the Department of Environmental Protection. Except as
11 otherwise provided by this act, all the functions, powers and duties
12 of the existing Division of Fish, Game and Shellfisheries, and the
13 director, thereof, are continued in the Division of Fish, Game and
14 Wildlife and the director thereof, and whenever the term "Division
15 of Fish, Game and Shellfisheries" occurs or any reference is made
16 thereto in any law, contract or document, the same shall be deemed
17 or mean to refer to the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife.

18 b. The Fish and Game Council, together with all its functions,
19 powers and duties, is continued as the Fish and Game Council in
20 but not of the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife in the
21 Department of Environmental Protection.
22 (cf: P.L.1979, c.199, s.74)
23

24 14. Section 2 of P.L.1999, c.282 (C.23:2B-15.1) is amended to
25 read as follows:

26 2. a. The Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife is continued and
27 constituted as the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department
28 of Environmental Protection. All the functions, powers, and duties
29 of the existing Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife and the director
30 thereof are continued in the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the
31 director thereof, and whenever the term "Division of Fish, Game
32 and Wildlife" occurs or any reference is made thereto in any law,
33 contract, or document, it shall be deemed or mean to refer to the
34 Division of Fish and Wildlife.

35 b. The Fish and Game Council, together with all its functions,
36 powers and duties, is continued as the Fish and Game Council in
37 but not of the Division of Fish and Wildlife in the Department of
38 Environmental Protection.
39 (cf: P.L.1999, c.282, s.2)
40

41 15. Section 4 of P.L.1984, c.37 (C.23:4-22.4) is amended to read
42 as follows:

43 4. The Board of Governors of Rutgers, The State University,
44 shall direct the Department of Wildlife Management at Cook
45 College to conduct a study to identify or develop an animal trap
46 which substantially reduces injury and pain to both targeted and
47 nontargeted animals which are caught in the trap and which could
48 serve as an alternative to the steel-jaw leghold type animal trap.

1 The results of this study shall be published in a report to the New
2 Jersey Fish and Game Council, hereinafter referred to as the
3 "council," in but not of the Department of Environmental Protection
4 within one year of the effective date of this amendatory and
5 supplementary act. For the purposes of this amendatory and
6 supplementary act, the steel-jaw leghold type animal trap does not
7 mean mouse and rat traps designed for use in or under buildings.

8 (cf: P.L.1984, c.37, s.4)

9

10 16. (New section) a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or
11 regulation to the contrary, including but not limited to the
12 provisions of subsection a. of section 5 of P.L.1948, c.448
13 (C.13:1B-5), lands under the administration, ownership,
14 management, or control of the Division of Fish and Wildlife or the
15 Department of Environmental Protection which were acquired in
16 whole or in part with monies from the "hunters' and anglers' license
17 fund" created pursuant to R.S.23:3-11 and R.S.23:3-12, from the
18 New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Account established pursuant to
19 section 5 of P.L.1983, c.504 (C.23:3-79), or with federal aid for fish
20 and wildlife purposes, shall not be closed to the taking of any
21 species of freshwater fish or wildlife in accordance with the State
22 Fish and Game Code by the action of any State agency or official
23 without the approval of the Fish and Game Council.

24 b. For the purposes of subsection a. of this section, "federal aid
25 for fish and wildlife purposes" means any federal grant program to
26 the states for fish and wildlife purposes using funds derived from
27 the assessment of federal excise taxes on sporting equipment,
28 including but not limited to the federal aid in sport fish restoration
29 program, 16 U.S.C. s.777 et seq., and the federal aid in wildlife
30 restoration program, 16 U.S.C. s.669 et seq.

31

32 17. This act shall take effect immediately.

33

34

35

STATEMENT

36

37 This bill clarifies existing law that the Fish and Game Council is
38 empowered as the sole State governmental entity responsible for
39 determining whether or not any species of fresh water fish, game
40 bird, game animal, or fur-bearing animal may be fished, hunted, or
41 trapped, and in determining what circumstances, when and in what
42 localities, by what means and in what amounts and numbers those
43 species may be fished, hunted, or trapped. The bill also clarifies
44 existing law to require the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the
45 division director, the Department of Environmental Protection
46 (DEP), and the Commissioner of Environmental Protection to
47 implement the State Fish and Game Code as adopted by the council
48 and any comprehensive policies concerned therewith as formulated

1 by the council, all as directed by the council. The bill further
2 emphasizes the autonomy of the council pertaining to matters of
3 fresh water fishing, hunting, and trapping by removing the council
4 from the division and instead locating it in, but not of, the division
5 and the DEP.

6 This bill is necessary to correct the clearly erroneous
7 interpretation of the statutory law given recently by the New Jersey
8 Supreme Court in the case of U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation
9 v. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. In its
10 February 28, 2005 decision in that case, the Court reversed a well-
11 reasoned, unanimous three-judge Appellate Division opinion and
12 thereby stopped the black bear hunt scheduled for December 2004
13 until certain specified conditions were met. In doing so, the
14 Supreme Court found that the Fish and Game Council and the
15 Commissioner of Environmental Protection have "shared
16 responsibility" regarding the formulation of comprehensive policies
17 pertaining to game animals, including black bears. The effect of
18 this decision was to give the commissioner veto authority over any
19 action taken by the council, thereby transforming the council into a
20 mere advisory body. This result is clearly contrary to the statutory
21 law establishing the Fish and Game Council as a fully capable
22 regulatory body, providing for adoption of the State Fish and Game
23 Code by the council only, and establishing the State Fish and Game
24 Code as the only mechanism by which fresh water fishing, hunting,
25 and trapping is regulated in the State. The Court's decision wrongly
26 upset an established statutory framework, over 50 years of
27 precedent, and the designed and mutually accepted working
28 relationship established by the council with the Division of Fish and
29 Wildlife over that time period since the council was created by law.

30 Section 16 of this bill also provides that lands under the
31 administration, ownership, management, or control of the Division
32 of Fish and Wildlife or the DEP which were acquired in whole or in
33 part with monies from the "hunters' and anglers' license fund," from
34 the New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Account, or with federal aid for
35 fish and wildlife purposes, shall not be closed to the taking of any
36 species of freshwater fish or wildlife in accordance with the State
37 Fish and Game Code by the action of any State agency or official
38 without the approval of the Fish and Game Council. This section
39 responds in part to an Appellate Division opinion issued November
40 24, 2004 in the case of Safari Club International v. New Jersey
41 Department of Environmental Protection in which the court
42 interpreted the current statutory law in support of affirming the
43 notice recently issued by the Commissioner of Environmental
44 Protection closing all lands owned, managed or controlled by the
45 DEP to bear hunting.