

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

BILL NO. House Bill 615

PRINTER NO. 1784

AMOUNT

See Fiscal Impact

FUND

Game Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

February 28, 2019

PRIME SPONSOR

Representative Gillespie

DESCRIPTION

House Bill 615 Amends Title 71 (State Government) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in retirement for State employees and officers, to include Game Commission officers (game wardens) of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) as "enforcement officers."

The bill amends Section 5102 (relating to definitions) of Title 71, adding to the definition of "enforcement officer" for retirement purposes, to include Game Commission officers and any other commissioned law enforcement personnel under the employment of the PGC who have and exercise the same law enforcement powers as Game Commission officers. This will effectively allow these officers to qualify for the age 50 (normal retirement age) or 20 years of service (early retirement/alternative benefit) provision under State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) which other officers receive.

House Bill 615 also clarifies that deputy Game Commission Officers are not included within the definition of "enforcement officer."

The legislation is scheduled to take effect in 60 days.

FISCAL IMPACT:

A letter issued by the Independent Fiscal Office on May 7, 2019, stated the enactment of this bill is projected to increase employer annual costs for the Game Commission by \$400,000 to cover the normal cost of funding the earlier superannuation age benefits for Game Commission enforcement officers. Additionally, the Game Commission will incur costs of \$900,000 annually for a ten-year period to fund the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability in equal dollar installments as a percentage of compensation of all affected active Game Commission employees. The bill provides that the Game Commission shall begin making payments from the first day of July following the valuation date coincident with or next following the effective date of the bill, so the first year of the ten-year amortization period is projected to be 2020-21. The increase in employer annual costs will continue until all Game Commission officers hired before January 1, 2011, retire, at which time costs will decrease because of the lower Act 120 of 2010 benefit accrual levels.