



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 714

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 5388

House of Representatives, April 16, 2025

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING FISHING AND HUNTING RIGHTS OF CERTAIN NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 47-65a of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 Notwithstanding the provisions of section 26-27, any Indian may
4 take, hunt or trap any wild bird or quadruped on, or take or assist in
5 taking any fish or bait species in the waters of, the reservation of such
6 Indian's tribe without a license therefor, subject to the regulations
7 promulgated by the council and to such seasonal and bag limitations as
8 may be provided by law. The Commissioner of Energy and
9 Environmental Protection shall issue, without fee, a private land deer
10 permit to any Indian for use only on the reservation of such Indian's
11 tribe, provided such reservation is not less than [two hundred fifty] ten
12 acres in size and provided further no such Indian shall be issued more
13 than one such permit per season. Such permit shall allow the use of a
14 rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader or bow and arrow on such reservation land

15 from November first until December thirty-first, inclusive, of each year.

16 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2025*) The Commissioner of Energy
17 and Environmental Protection shall develop a ceremonial taking permit
18 for the taking of an animal specimen on state lands by any Indian for
19 ceremonial purposes provided: (1) There shall be no fee for such permit,
20 (2) such permit shall allow for only one such taking, and (3) such
21 specimen shall be a species that otherwise may be taken on state lands.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	47-65a
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section

Section 1	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	47-65a
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section

ENV *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Cost	42,500	32,500
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	13,231	13,231

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 increases the number of free private land deer permits issued annually, by decreasing the required minimum size of an Indian's reservation in order to qualify. This results in a revenue loss to the resources of the General Fund; the scope of the revenue loss is indeterminate as it is unknown how many additional free permits would be issued and correspondingly how many fewer (paid) permits would be purchased. The cost of firearm permits ranges from \$11-\$41 for Connecticut residents.²

Section 2 requires the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to develop a free ceremonial taking permit. This results in a revenue loss to the resources of the General Fund. The scope of the revenue loss is indeterminate as it is unknown how many

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

²<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/hunting/2025-connecticut-hunting-and-trapping-guide/hunting-and-trapping-licenses>

ceremonial permits would be issued and correspondingly how many fewer hunting and fishing (paid) permits would be purchased.

Additionally, **Section 2** results in a cost to DEEP associated with the development and enforcement of the new permit. DEEP would require a part-time Environmental Conservation Officer, with a salary of \$32,500 and corresponding fringe benefits of \$13,231 (for a total of \$45,721) annually, beginning in FY 26. DEEP would also require \$10,000 in information technology funding in order to update the on-line licensing system to incorporate the new permit.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the number of permits issued.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 5388*****AN ACT CONCERNING FISHING AND HUNTING RIGHTS OF CERTAIN NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill reduces, from 250 to 10 acres, the required minimum size of an Indian's reservation in order for the Indian to qualify for a free private land deer permit from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to take (e.g., hunt, kill, or capture) deer on the tribe's reservation land. As under existing law, an Indian can only be issued one private land deer permit per season, and the permit must allow for the use of rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader, or bow and arrow on the reservation from November 1 until December 31 (i.e. the same season and weapons allowed for certain landowners with private land deer permits).

The bill also requires DEEP to develop a ceremonial taking permit, under which an Indian may take an animal on state lands for ceremonial purposes. The permit must be free and allow for only one taking of an animal that is otherwise allowed to be taken on state lands.

By law, an "Indian" is a person who is a member of the Paucatuck Eastern Pequot, Mashantucket Pequot, Schaghticoke, Golden Hill Paugussett, or Mohegan tribe (CGS § 47-63).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/28/2025)