

Senate Bill 206 (RULES COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Senator Williams of the 19th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to game and fish, so
2 as to provide that lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources shall be open to
3 access and use for recreational hunting except as limited by the department for reasons of
4 public safety or homeland security or as otherwise limited by law; to define a term; to change
5 certain provisions relating to hunting deer with dogs; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
6 purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to game and fish, is amended by
10 adding a new Code section to read as follows:

11 "27-1-3.1.

12 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'department managed lands' means those lands
13 that the department owns or those lands over which the department holds management
14 authority.

15 (b) Subject to valid existing rights, department managed lands shall be open to access and
16 use for recreational hunting except as limited by the department for reasons of public safety
17 or homeland security or as otherwise limited by law.

18 (c) The department shall exercise its authority, consistent with subsection (b) of this Code
19 section, in a manner to support, promote, and enhance recreational hunting opportunities
20 to the extent authorized by law. The department shall not be required to give preference to
21 hunting over other uses of department managed lands or over land or water management
22 priorities established by state law.

23 (d) To the greatest practical extent, department land management decisions and actions
24 shall not result in any net loss of land acreage available for hunting opportunities on
25 department managed lands that exists on the effective date of this Code section."

26 **SECTION 2.**

S. B. 206 (SUB)

1 Said title is further amended by striking subsection (c) of Code Section 27-3-17, relating to
2 hunting deer with dogs, and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

3 "(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to hunt deer with dogs on any tract of real property
4 unless a permit for hunting deer with dogs has been issued by the department for such tract
5 to the owner or owners of such tract or the lessee of deer hunting rights for such tract. A
6 permit for hunting deer with dogs shall not be issued to a lessee of deer hunting rights for
7 any tract of real property that is less than 1,000 contiguous acres or to the property owner
8 or owners for any tract of real property that is less than 250 contiguous acres. Any
9 application for a permit for hunting deer with dogs shall be on such form as prescribed by
10 the department; shall be accompanied by the required application fee; and shall include a
11 written description of the tract boundaries and a map showing key features such as public
12 roads or streams on or bordering the tract and occupied dwellings on adjacent properties.
13 The application must be signed by all persons owning any portion of the tract of real
14 property or an authorized agent thereof. The application fee for such permit shall be
15 \$100.00 for an annual permit or \$25.00 for a two-day permit."
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SECTION 3.

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All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.