

HB 110 Requirements for Marine Resources Commission Agency Strategic Plans, 2006 Update

HB 110 (2006 Session) amended Va. Code § 2.2-5510 to require that each state agency include in its strategic plan “*an analysis of the impact that the aging of the population will have on its ability to deliver services and a description of how the agency is responding to these changes.*” The bill provides further that “*(b)ased on guidance from the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, each agency shall report by October 1 of each year to the Governor and to the General Assembly its progress for addressing the impact of the aging of the population in at least five specific actions.*”

1. To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.

The Marine Resources Commission is a regulatory agency in the Secretariat of Natural Resources. The agency sells approximately 3, 200 Commercial Watermen’s Licenses for fishing in the tidal waters, and in the last year served the following clients: 251 in the 65 – 69 age group, 163 in the 70 – 74 age group, 121 in the 75 – 79 age group and 58 in the 80+ age group. This is the only service offered by the agency that has any age related statistics available, because provision of one’s birth date is a part of the Commercial Licensing process, as a reduced price license is available to citizens over 70.

In addition, Recreational Fishing Licenses, for the tidal waters, sold by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the MRC, are free for citizens 65 and older.

2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency’s capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?

The agency does not have any data on services provided to senior citizens. Since the agency is primarily a regulatory one, permitting, license and law enforcement services are offered identically, regardless of age.

3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.

Recreational Fishing Licenses, for fishing in the tidal waters, sold by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the MRC, are free for citizens 65 and older. Free licenses will hopefully promote fishing as a recreational activity for seniors.

4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides “consumer-oriented” publications and websites online that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.

The agency headquarters is fully accessible to all citizens, and agency services are provided as requested. Accommodations for agency services provided to its clients are made as requests are received.

The agency web site is designed to maximize accessibility for all citizens. One “senior-friendly” feature includes “access keys” in all main menu options that allow users to use the keyboard, as opposed to the mouse, to navigate our website. Additionally our text easily scales to larger sizes by using the “View/Text Size” menu option in Internet Explorer. Also, the site scales smoothly to lower resolutions of 800 x 600 that seniors are likely to prefer.

Any citizen can listen to our monthly agency Commission meetings in the MP3 easy listening offering on the agency website.

5. Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia’s population.

The agency is reviewing agency services and programs to see if any additional enhancements are necessary to address the impact of the aging of Virginia’s population.