

FISCAL NOTE

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ANALYST ESTIMATE

Revised to reflect all adopted amendments: AM1877, AM2147, and AM2331.

ESTIMATE OF FISCAL IMPACT – STATE AGENCIES (See narrative for political subdivision estimates)					
EXPENDITURES	GENERAL	CASH	FEDERAL	REVOLVING	TOTAL
FY2025-2026	0	0	0	0	0
FY2026-2027	0	0	0	0	0
FY2027-2028	0	104,000	0	0	104,000
FY2028-2029	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	GENERAL	CASH	FEDERAL	REVOLVING	TOTAL
FY2025-2026	0	0	0	0	0
FY2026-2027	0	0	0	0	0
FY2027-2028	0	(1,313)	0	0	(1,313)
FY2028-2029	0	(1,313)	0	0	(1,313)

Any Fiscal Notes received from state agencies and political subdivisions are attached following the Legislative Fiscal Analyst Estimate.

LB979 as amended by AM1877, AM2147, and AM2331 would:

- Define wildlife abatement as to frighten, flush, haze, take, or kill certain wildlife to manage depredation, damage, or other threats to human health and safety or commerce caused by such wildlife.
- Modify the use of Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's (NGPC's) Game Law Investigation Cash Fund to be used for investigations to enforce the Game Law.
- Allow for the purchase of investigative vehicles, specialized investigatory equipment, digital investigative services, and specialized investigative training using the Game Law Investigation Cash Fund.
- Stipulate that NGPC may accept gifts, grants, bequests, or contributions; in addition to collecting fees (not to exceed staffing and materials cost) for fish and wildlife education; to be deposited into the NGPC's Educational Fund.
- Allow the permit issuance fee statutory cap to be increased from \$3 to \$4 ,for NGPC and other authorized entities performing the issuing work and remitting the fees for the licenses, permits, and stamps.
- Change the maximum permit fee statutory caps for both the Nebraska Resident and Non-Resident Lifetime hunting, fishing, and combination permits; to not exceed twenty times the annual fee for such a permit.
- Give the NGPC permission to expend up to 75% of the Nebraska Lifetime Aquatic Habitat Stamp funds; while retaining 25% of these fees for these stamps in the Nebraska Aquatic Habitat Fund for investment.
- Increase the application fee statutory cap for antelope permits requiring a drawing from \$7 to \$9. Raises the Nebraska Resident antelope permit statutory cap from \$39 to \$50; and the Non-Resident antelope permit statutory cap from \$257 to \$480 (not to be set under \$369 by the NGPC). Plus, NGPC is given rulemaking authority to issue a preference point and bonus point for elk.
- Raise the application fee statutory cap for Nebraska Resident bighorn sheep random drawing permit from \$34 to \$44.
- Increase the licensing fee cap in statute for establishing a game breeding and controlled shooting area to propagate, preserve, and shoot game birds, from \$198 to \$258.
- Raise the application fee statutory cap for paddlefish permits requiring a drawing from \$7 to \$9; and allow NGPC to issue preference points.
- Clarify that anyone possessing, transporting, selling, purchasing, bartering, trading, importing, or exporting any wildlife taken, or conspiring to do these will be in violation of the Game Law and guilty of a Class I misdemeanor.
- Increase the 3yr motorboat registration fees for:
 - Class 1 motorboats (less than 16ft.) from \$28 to \$40;
 - Class 2 motorboats (16ft. to less than 26ft.) from \$51 to \$60;
 - Class 3 motorboats (26ft. to less than 40ft.) from \$72.50 to \$80; and
 - Class 4 motorboats (40ft. to less than 120 ft.) from \$120 to \$130.
- Require everyone aboard a personal watercraft to wear a USCG approved floatation device for the personal watercraft to be operated on Nebraska waters.
- Allow NGPC to issue limited mountain lion permits to qualified landowners, leaseholders, or immediate family members; whose farm or ranch land is located within a NGPC designated mountain lion management zone. The applicants must be either:
 - A Nebraska resident who owns 320+ acres of farm or ranch land for agricultural purposes or is the partner, officer, shareholder, or beneficiary designated as the qualifying landowner by a partnership, corporation, or trust;
 - A Nebraska resident who leases 640+ acres of farm or ranch land for ag purposes or a partner, officer, shareholder, or designated beneficiary of a qualifying landowner by partnership, corporation, or trust;
 - A Nebraska resident who owns or leases a combined 640+ acres of farm or ranch land for ag purposes or a partner, officer, shareholder, or designated beneficiary of a qualifying landowner by partnership, corporation, or trust; or
 - A member of the qualifying landowner's or leaseholder's immediate family.
- Set the application fees for Nebraska Resident limited mountain lion permits to not exceed ½ the regular mountain lion hunt application fee.
- Establish that the number of limited mountain lion permit applications allowed per farm or ranch land shall not exceed the totality of the farm/ranch acres divided by the minimum acreage requirements for the property. This bill states that only one person may qualify for the same described property. Applicants who did not receive a limited mountain lion permit in prior years, may be given preference by NGPC.
- Put into statute that the number of limited mountain lion permits issued for a single management unit, may not exceed 75% of the total regular mountain lion permits issued in that single management unit.

- Allow NGPC permission to establish a non-refundable application fee of \$9 or less, for wild turkey permits; to be awarded in a random drawing. Plus, raise the Nebraska Resident wild turkey permit statutory fee cap from \$31 to \$40; and the Non-Resident wild turkey permit statutory fee cap from \$164 to \$214.
- Permit the NGPC to make rules for issuing preference points for wild turkey permits and charge a preference point fee of not more than \$24 for Nebraska Residents and \$72 for Non-Residents.

This bill would become effective three calendar months after the Legislature adjourns.

Expenditures:

The NGPC has indicated the agency would incur a one-time permit system programming expenditure for a system developer of \$104,000 Cash Funds in FY2027-28.

The Nebraska Supreme Court would have minimal fiscal impact for judicial education, which they can absorb in current appropriation.

Revenues:

NGPC is estimating a revenue loss of (\$1,313) Cash Funds in FY2027-28, for an estimated number of permits issued where the application cost of the Nebraska Resident limited mountain lion permits would be cut in half (currently \$15.00 down to \$7.50). NGPC has also noted that any non-refundable application fees, issue fees, boat registrations, and permit fee caps would not cause a fiscal impact without Commission action. This would include both public hearings and a Commission vote for each potential increase. If those were to occur, there would be future revenues after the actual changes.

The LFO would expect to see a very similar revenue loss in FY2028-29; with future revenues dependent on the number of permits offered based upon the mountain lion population of each designated management zone.

There is no basis to disagree with these estimations of fiscal impact by NGPC nor Nebraska Supreme Court, given the assumptions used.

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2026

LB⁽¹⁾ 979 AM 2147, AM 1877, & AM 2331 Game Law and the State Boat Act

FISCAL NOTE

State Agency OR Political Subdivision Name: ⁽²⁾

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Prepared by: ⁽³⁾ Christina Peters

Date Prepared: 3/12/2026

Phone: ⁽⁵⁾ 402-471-5403

ESTIMATE PROVIDED BY STATE AGENCY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION

	FY 2026-27		FY 2027-28	
	EXPENDITURES	REVENUE	EXPENDITURES	REVENUE
GENERAL FUNDS				
CASH FUNDS			104,000	(1,312.50)
FEDERAL FUNDS				
OTHER FUNDS				
TOTAL FUNDS			104,000	(1,312.50)

Explanation of Estimate:

The proposed legislation as amended clarifies the conditions under which the Game Fund may be used for wildlife abatement and provides clarity for the use of Game Law Investigation Cash Fund. It authorizes the Commission to collect fees for fish and wildlife education programs through the Fish and Wildlife Educational Fund. The bill will increase the maximum amount the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission could charge for several non-resident and resident permits, grants authority for the Commission to adopt rules and regulations governing preference and bonus points, and updates boating safety requirements and vessel registration fees.

Section 2 – Clarifies the definition of wildlife abatement.

Section 3 – Authorizes the use of the Game Fund for wildlife abatement related to damages caused by big game.

Section 4 – Codifies the Game Law Investigation Cash Fund to include language to purchase investigative vehicles, investigative equipment and provide investigative training.

Sections 5 & 6 Codifies the Commission’s authority to accept contributions to the Fish and Wildlife education fund and collect fees for fish and wildlife education programs.

Section 7 – References increasing the maximum permit issuance fee.

Section 8 - Addresses increasing the maximum permit fees that may be charged for non-resident, or resident lifetime permits (fur harvesting, hunting, fishing or combination hunting and fishing).

Section 9 – Authorizes provisions to allow the Commission to expend Nebraska Habitat and Nebraska Aquatic Habitat fund while retaining twenty-five percent of the lifetime aquatic habitat stamp sales.

Section 10 - Addresses increasing the maximum fee cap for the nonrefundable deer application and increases the cap of nonresident and resident deer permits. Provides the Commission with the flexibility to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for issuing deer preference points.

Section 11 - Addresses increasing the maximum fee cap for the nonrefundable antelope application, increases the base permit fee for non-resident antelope permits and increases the maximum fee cap for nonresident and resident antelope permits, while providing the Commission with the flexibility to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations for issuing antelope preference points.

Section 12 – Provides the Commission with the flexibility to adopt rules and regulation for issuing elk preference and bonus points.

Section 13 – Increases the maximum fee for a nonrefundable application for mountain sheep.

Section 14 – Provides the Commission with the flexibility to adopt and promulgate rules and regulations prescribing issuance of free-earned landowner elk permit.

Section 15 – Increases the maximum fee cap for Controlled Shooting Area Licenses.

Section 16 - Provides the Commission with the flexibility to adopt rules and regulation for issuing paddlefish preference points.

Section 17 – Classifies the possession, transport, sale, trade, or otherwise handling of wildlife taken or possessed in violation of the Game Law as a Class I misdemeanor. (AM1877)

Section 18 – Increases the Boating registration fee for Class I through IV vessels.

Section 19 – Removes outdated language for life jackets.

AM2147 establishes a nonrefundable application fee for turkey permits and turkey preference points. It also includes the maximum fee for the nonrefundable application, resident and nonresident preference points, and resident and nonresident

turkey permits.

Increasing the non-refundable application fees, issue fees, boat registration, and permit fee caps do not cause a fiscal impact without Commission action. Public hearings and a Commission vote are required if increases are deemed necessary for future calendar years. Therefore, there is no fiscal impact.

AM2331 establishes a resident limited landowner mountain lion permit for landowners (320 acres) or leaseholders (640 acres) whose qualifying land is contained within the unit. The permit would be valid to hunt the entire management unit. The landowner application fee would be 1/2 of the application fee for the regular permit to hunt mountain lions (2025: \$15.00 * 1/2 = \$7.50).

The issuance of the limited mountain lion permits shall not exceed 75 percent of the regular permits authorized for mountain lion management units. The number of applications allowed for a limited landowner mountain lion permit for each farm or ranch shall not exceed the total acreage divided by the minimum acreage requirements. No more than one person may qualify for the same described property. Preference may be given to a person who did not receive a permit during the previous years.

It is estimated that 159 landowners currently apply for mountain lion permits during the season. During the 2025 season, Nebraska Game and Parks issued 990 resident mountain lion permits. The Commission may issue up to eighty (80) permits by lottery for each mountain lion in the harvest for each unit with an open season. In 2025 there were three open units: the Pine Ridge with a twelve (12) mountain lion limit, the Wildcat Hills with a three (3) mountain lion limit, and the Niobrara with a four (4) mountain lion limit. Nineteen (lion limit) * 80 = 1520 permits offered. Permits are adjusted annually based on population estimates and goals set for the units. Note: Permits did NOT sell out in 2023, 2024 or 2025. It is estimated to take approximately 3 months' worth of system developer fees (\$200.00 per hour = \$104,000) to make the necessary changes to the permitting system.

BREAKDOWN BY MAJOR OBJECTS OF EXPENDITURE

Personal Services:

POSITION TITLE	NUMBER OF POSITIONS		2026-27 EXPENDITURES	2027-28 EXPENDITURES
	26-27	27-28		
Benefits.....				
... Operating.....				104,000
.... Travel.....				
. Capital outlay.....				
Aid.....				
. Capital improvements.....				
TOTAL.....				104,000

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2026

LB⁽¹⁾ 979, AM1877, AM2147, AM2331

FISCAL NOTE

State Agency OR Political Subdivision
Name: ⁽²⁾

05 Supreme Court

Prepared by: ⁽³⁾ Eric Asboe

Date Prepared: 3/19/2026
⁽⁴⁾

Phone: ⁽⁵⁾ 402-326-9215

ESTIMATE PROVIDED BY STATE AGENCY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION

	<u>FY 2026-27</u>		<u>FY 2026-27</u>	
	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>REVENUE</u>	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>REVENUE</u>
GENERAL FUNDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
CASH FUNDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
FEDERAL FUNDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
OTHER FUNDS	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	_____	_____	_____	_____

Explanation of Estimate:

Minimal fiscal impact from LB979, as amended by the amendments listed above, to provide judicial education. No additional resources required.

BREAKDOWN BY MAJOR OBJECTS OF EXPENDITURE

Personal Services:

<u>POSITION TITLE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF POSITIONS</u>		<u>2026-27</u>	<u>2027-28</u>
	<u>26-27</u>	<u>27-28</u>	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>EXPENDITURES</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Benefits.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
...				
Operating.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
....				
Travel.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
.				
Capital outlay.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Aid.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
.				
Capital improvements.....	_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL.....	_____	_____	_____	_____

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES STATE BUDGET DIVISION: REVIEW OF AGENCY & POLT. SUB. RESPONSE

LB: 979 AM: 2147, 1877, 2331 AGENCY/POLT. SUB: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

REVIEWED BY: Joe Massey DATE: 3/13/2026 PHONE: (402) 471-4181

COMMENTS: No basis to disagree with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's assessment of fiscal impact from LB 979 AM 2147, 1877, 2331