

Private Landowner Big Game Revisions

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Carl R. Albrecht

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill addresses the hunting of big game.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms;
- establishes the criteria for a landowner draw;
- provides procedures to become an applicant for a landowner draw;
- addresses the redeeming of a voucher;
- guarantees vouchers under certain circumstances;
- requires compliance with other laws; and
- addresses rulemaking.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

23A-4-711, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **23A-4-711** is enacted to read:

23A-4-711 . Private landowner vouchers.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Applicant" means a person who:

- (i) holds a fee simple ownership interest in at least 640 contiguous acres but not more than 8,999 contiguous acres of private land in Utah within a limited entry elk unit;
- and

- (ii) has an application and proof of huntable bull elk approved under Subsection (4).

- 32 (b) "Block" means 640 contiguous acres that are not excluded under Subsection (2).
- 33 (c) "Region" means one of the regions with boundaries established for administrative
- 34 purposes by the division under Section 23A-2-303.
- 35 (d) "Voucher" means a right to hunt bull elk that is obtained pursuant to this section and
- 36 redeemed for one permit to hunt bull elk on the contiguous private property used to
- 37 qualify as an applicant.
- 38 (2)(a) An applicant may enter an annual landowner draw for one bull elk voucher for
- 39 every complete block owned by the applicant.
- 40 (b) The private land that is the basis for determining whether there is a block for an
- 41 application to qualify for a landowner draw shall have at least one common owner
- 42 throughout the private land.
- 43 (c) In order for an applicant to qualify for a landowner draw, all the owners of the
- 44 private land described in Subsection (2)(b) shall agree to the applicant applying for a
- 45 landowner draw.
- 46 (d) The following private land is not eligible for purposes of determining a block:
- 47 (i) private land within a cooperative wildlife management unit under Chapter 7,
- 48 Cooperative Wildlife Management Units; or
- 49 (ii) private land within a landowner association program established by the Wildlife
- 50 Board by rule made in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
- 51 Rulemaking Act.
- 52 (3) The division shall determine the number of vouchers in a bull elk landowner draw under
- 53 this section by allocating an additional 5% of the total number of limited entry bull
- 54 permits available within a limited entry elk unit.
- 55 (4)(a) To qualify as an applicant under Subsection (2), a person shall obtain approval of
- 56 the information described in Subsection (4)(b) by the biologist of the region in which
- 57 a block used in an application is located.
- 58 (b) To seek approval, a person shall file:
- 59 (i) an application to a division office located in the region in which the block used in
- 60 an application is located that includes:
- 61 (A) the name of the person;
- 62 (B) the date of the application;
- 63 (C) the number of blocks in which the person holds an ownership interest;
- 64 (D) proof of the ownership interest in the private land for which the person is
- 65 seeking a voucher;

66 (E) proof of the number of contiguous acres owned by the person within a limited
67 entry elk unit; and

68 (F) the location of the private land for which the person is seeking a voucher; and

69 (ii) proof that the biologist of the region in which a block used in the application is
70 located has determined that there are huntable bull elk in the private land during
71 the bull elk hunting season.

72 (c) Once a person is approved as an applicant for a landowner draw, the applicant is
73 automatically approved each year and does not need to reapply unless there is a
74 change in land ownership or acreage that would affect the person's level of
75 participation in the landowner draw. If there is a change in ownership or acreage, the
76 person shall file the information required under Subsection (4)(b) to be eligible for
77 the next landowner draw.

78 (5)(a) An individual may redeem a voucher to obtain a permit to hunt bull elk:

79 (i) for use by one of the following:

80 (A) if the applicant is an individual, the applicant or an immediate family member
81 of the applicant;

82 (B) if the applicant is an entity that is not a trust, an individual holding an
83 ownership interest in the entity or an immediate family member of that
84 individual;

85 (C) if the applicant is a trust, an individual who is an original trustee or
86 beneficiary of the trust or an immediate family member of that individual; or

87 (D) an individual to whom the applicant sells, donates, or otherwise transfers the
88 voucher; and

89 (ii) conditioned on the individual:

90 (A) being otherwise authorized to hunt big game under this title; and

91 (B) only hunting under that permit on the contiguous acres of private land owned
92 by the applicant within a limited entry elk unit.

93 (b) Notwithstanding a season for hunting bull elk designated by the Wildlife Board, an
94 individual who hunts on the applicant's private land pursuant to a voucher redeemed
95 under Subsection (5)(a) may:

96 (i) use archery equipment from the start date of the archery bull hunt on the
97 corresponding limited entry elk unit; and

98 (ii) convert to any weapon starting on September 1 and ending on October 31.

99 (6)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (6)(f), an applicant that qualifies for a

- 100 landowner draw under Subsections (2) through (5) and who owns at least 4,000
101 contiguous acres of private land but not more than 8,999 contiguous acres of private
102 land within a limited entry elk unit shall annually receive two bull elk vouchers.
- 103 (b) An individual may redeem a voucher obtained under this Subsection (6) in
104 accordance with Subsection (5).
- 105 (c) An applicant described in Subsection (6)(a) may sell, donate, or otherwise transfer a
106 voucher received under Subsection (6)(a).
- 107 (d) A voucher under this Subsection (6) is in addition to and not taken from the 5%
108 additional bull elk permits that are designated for the landowner draw under
109 Subsection (3).
- 110 (e) An applicant that receives a voucher under this Subsection (6) may also enter a
111 landowner draw for a bull elk voucher in accordance with Subsection (2).
- 112 (f) An applicant may receive only one voucher under this Subsection (6) for any year in
113 which the average age of the bull elk population in the limited entry elk unit where
114 the voucher applies is lower than the age objective in the applicable elk management
115 plan. The limitation of only one voucher under this Subsection (6)(f) applies until the
116 average age of the bull elk population for that limited entry elk unit in a year equals
117 or exceeds the age objective in the applicable elk management plan.
- 118 (7) An applicant who participates in a landowner draw may not receive a depredation bull
119 elk permit or submit a claim for compensation for wildlife damage to the applicant's
120 private land used to qualify for the landowner draw.
- 121 (8) An individual who redeems a voucher under this section shall comply with the other
122 applicable provisions of this title and rules or proclamations of the Wildlife Board.
- 123 (9) The Wildlife Board may not make rules under this section but may enforce rules that
124 otherwise would be applicable to hunting bull elk.

125 **Section 2. Effective Date.**

126 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.