

Casey Snider proposes the following substitute bill:

Private Landowner Big Game Revisions

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Carl R. Albrecht

Senate Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers

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;
- addresses rulemaking;
- provides for the creation of reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management units;

and

- addresses limits placed on reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management units.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

23A-4-711, Utah Code Annotated 1953

23A-7-213, 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:

29 **23A-4-711 . Private landowner vouchers.**30 (1) As used in this section:31 (a)(i) "Applicant" means a person who:32 (A) holds a fee simple ownership interest in at least 640 contiguous acres but not
33 more than 8,999 contiguous acres of private land in Utah within a limited entry
34 elk unit; and35 (B) has submitted an application to the division to participate in a landowner draw
36 to hunt bull elk.37 (ii) "Applicant" does not include a person who is a landowner or a landowner
38 association under a reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit
39 created in Section 23A-7-213.40 (b) "Block" means 640 contiguous acres that are not excluded under Subsection (2).41 (c) "Voucher" means an authorization issued by the division that entitles a person to
42 purchase a bull elk permit valid for the private land submitted in the application.43 (2)(a) An applicant may enter an annual landowner draw for a bull elk voucher for every
44 complete block owned by the applicant.45 (b) The private land that is the basis for determining whether there is a block for an
46 application to qualify for a landowner draw shall have at least one common owner
47 throughout the private land.48 (c) In order for an applicant to qualify for a landowner draw, all the owners of the
49 private land described in Subsection (2)(b) shall agree to the applicant applying for a
50 landowner draw.51 (d) Multiple applicants may not submit an application for the same block and the
52 division may reject all applications for a block if more than one application is
53 received for a single block.54 (e) The following private land is not eligible for purposes of determining a block:55 (i) private land within a cooperative wildlife management unit under Chapter 7,
56 Cooperative Wildlife Management Units; or57 (ii) private land within a landowner association program established by the Wildlife
58 Board by rule made in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
59 Rulemaking Act.60 (3)(a) The division shall determine the number of vouchers in a bull elk landowner draw
61 under this section by allocating an additional 5% of the total number of limited entry
62 bull permits available in the public draw within a limited entry elk unit.

- 63 (b) The division shall allocate:
- 64 (i) 50% of the vouchers in a landowner draw to applicants with 4,000 contiguous
- 65 acres but not more than 8,999 contiguous acres; and
- 66 (ii) 50% of the vouchers in the landowner draw to applicants with at least 640
- 67 contiguous acres but less than 4,000 acres.
- 68 (c) If there is an odd number of vouchers in a landowner draw, the division shall allocate
- 69 the one extra voucher to:
- 70 (i) applicants described in Subsection (3)(b)(i) in years ending in odd numbers; and
- 71 (ii) applicants described in Subsection (3)(b)(ii) in years ending in even numbers.
- 72 (d) If a limited entry elk unit only has only one voucher available for the bull elk
- 73 landowner draw described in Subsection (3)(a), the division shall allocate that
- 74 voucher to an applicant with acreage of at least 640 contiguous acres but not more
- 75 than 3,999 contiguous acres of private land.
- 76 (4)(a) To qualify as an applicant under Subsection (2), a person shall obtain approval of
- 77 the information described in Subsection (4)(b) by the division.
- 78 (b) To seek approval, a person shall file an application with the division that includes:
- 79 (i) the name of the person;
- 80 (ii) the date of the application;
- 81 (iii) the number of blocks in which the person holds an ownership interest;
- 82 (iv) proof of the ownership interest in the private land for which the person is seeking
- 83 a voucher;
- 84 (v) proof of the number of contiguous acres owned by the person within a limited
- 85 entry elk unit; and
- 86 (vi) the location of the private land for which the person is seeking a voucher.
- 87 (c) The division shall:
- 88 (i) review an application; and
- 89 (ii) verify that property submitted in an application is capable of harboring bull elk
- 90 during the hunting season described in Subsection (5)(b).
- 91 (d) Once a person is approved as an applicant for a landowner draw, the applicant is
- 92 automatically approved each year and does not need to reapply unless there is a
- 93 change in land ownership, acreage, or habitat quality that would affect the person's
- 94 level of participation in the landowner draw. If there is a change in ownership or
- 95 acreage, the person shall file the information required under Subsection (4)(b) to be
- 96 eligible for the next landowner draw.

- 97 (5)(a) An individual may redeem a voucher to obtain a permit to hunt bull elk:
98 (i) if the individual is the applicant or is an individual to whom the applicant sells,
99 donates, or otherwise transfers the voucher; and
100 (ii) conditioned on the individual:
101 (A) being otherwise authorized to hunt big game under this title; and
102 (B) only hunting under that permit on the contiguous acres of private land owned
103 by the applicant within a limited entry elk unit.
104 (b) An individual who hunts on the applicant's private land pursuant to a voucher
105 redeemed under Subsection (5)(a) may:
106 (i) hunt with one type of legal weapon, as defined by the Wildlife Board by rule made
107 in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act;
108 and
109 (ii) hunt during one of the corresponding season dates for the type of legal weapon
110 used by the individual that is established by the Wildlife Board for a bull elk hunt
111 on the corresponding limited entry elk unit.
112 (6)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (6)(f), an applicant that qualifies for a
113 landowner draw under Subsections (2) through (5) and who owns at least 4,000
114 contiguous acres of private land but not more than 8,999 contiguous acres of private
115 land within a limited entry elk unit shall annually receive two bull elk vouchers.
116 (b) An individual may redeem a voucher obtained under this Subsection (6) in
117 accordance with Subsection (5).
118 (c) An applicant described in Subsection (6)(a) may sell, donate, or otherwise transfer a
119 voucher received under Subsection (6)(a).
120 (d) A voucher under this Subsection (6) is in addition to and not taken from the 5%
121 additional bull elk permits that are designated for the landowner draw under
122 Subsection (3).
123 (e) An applicant that receives a voucher under this Subsection (6) may also enter a
124 landowner draw for a bull elk voucher in accordance with Subsection (2).
125 (f) An applicant may receive only one voucher under this Subsection (6) for any year in
126 which the average age of the harvested bull elk in the limited entry elk unit where the
127 voucher applies is lower than the age objective in the applicable elk management
128 plan. The limitation of only one voucher under this Subsection (6)(f) applies until the
129 average age of the harvested bull elk for that limited entry elk unit in a year equals or
130 exceeds the age objective in the applicable elk management plan.

131 (7) During the fiscal year in which an applicant receives a bull elk voucher, the applicant
132 may not receive a depredation bull elk permit or submit a claim for compensation for
133 wildlife damage to the applicant's private land used to qualify for a landowner draw.

134 (8) An individual who redeems a voucher under this section shall comply with the other
135 applicable provisions of this title and rules or proclamations of the Wildlife Board.

136 (9)(a) The Wildlife Board may make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3,
137 Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, that are necessary to administer this section.

138 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (9)(a), a rule made by the Wildlife Board shall be
139 consistent with this section.

140 Section 2. Section **23A-7-213** is enacted to read:

141 **23A-7-213 . Reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit.**

142 (1)(a) The Wildlife Board may issue a certificate of registration for a reduced acreage
143 elk cooperative wildlife management unit to a landowner association that owns at
144 least 4,000 contiguous acres of private land but not more than 8,999 contiguous acres
145 of private land.

146 (b) A reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit may only authorize the
147 hunting of elk.

148 (2)(a) The Wildlife Board shall establish season dates and boundaries for a reduced
149 acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit.

150 (b) In accordance with Subsection 23A-2-305(3), if season dates specified in this
151 Subsection (2) start on a Sunday, the season date shall begin on the Saturday before.

152 (c) Season dates specified in this Subsection (2) may differ from statewide season dates.

153 (3) A reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit shall offer at least 50% of
154 the reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit authorizations for hunting
155 elk to the general public at the times and places designated on the application for a
156 certificate of registration.

157 (4) A reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit is governed by the other
158 provisions of this chapter.

159 (5) A landowner or an organization of owners of private lands that operate under a
160 certificate of registration for a reduced acreage elk cooperative wildlife management unit
161 may not apply for or obtain a voucher to purchase a bull elk permit under Section
162 23A-4-711.

163 Section 3. **Effective Date.**

164 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.