

STATEMENT OF REASONS

CHAPTER 35

HUNTING PERMIT REGULATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

W.S. § 23-1-302 (a) (i),(xxii) provides the Commission the authority to provide for season extensions for hunters with disabilities and to promulgate such orders as the Commission considers necessary to carry out the intent of this act.

W.S. § 23-1-302 (m) provides the Commission the authority to, by rule and regulation, provide for the issuance of a disabled hunter companion permit. Subsection (m)(iv) states the permit shall be issued in accordance with Commission rules and regulations specifying the physical limitations that must be met by the disabled hunter and the requirements for the permit holder.

The Department proposes amending Chapter 35 to address the issuance of hunting permits to persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Department proposes the following specific changes:

Section 2. It is proposed that this regulation will be effective immediately when signed by the Governor. Other sections and references have been updated to reflect the striking of Section 2. In the new Section 2, the definition of “Nonprofit Organization Dedicated to Providing Hunting Opportunities to Individuals with Disabilities” has been modified to conform to statutory language in SF066, passed by the Wyoming Legislature during the 2026 session.

New Section 3. Grand Teton National Park (Elk Hunt Areas 75 and 79) and the National Elk Refuge (Elk Hunt Area 77) allow disabled hunters and their companions to hunt in those areas. Language invalidating those permits (other than Disabled Hunter Season Extension Permits) has been struck from this section.

New Section 6. Edits to this section propose language that a Disabled Hunter Companion Permit shall remain valid unless revoked by the Department, rather than only for the calendar year in which it was issued. The provision that a person may be issued more than one Disabled Hunter Companion Permit has been struck, as one permit is sufficient for a person to act as a companion for multiple disabled hunters.

New Section 8. This section is being amended to be consistent with language in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 to clarify that Hunting Season Extension Permits allow a qualified applicant to hunt antelope, deer or elk five days prior to the earliest **regular season** opening date for their hunt area and subject to the limitations in Section 2 of those chapters. The season extensions do not apply to special archery seasons listed in Section 2 of those chapters. It is also being proposed to remove the provision that a person with a 100% service connected disability (based on a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs) qualifies for a hunting season extension. Many 100% disabled veterans would continue to be eligible for a hunting season extension permits based on the other

qualifications. This amendment conforms to the Commission's original intent to extend seasons to disabled hunters who have a visual disability, mobility disability or life-threatening illness.

Minor grammatical and formatting edits have been incorporated into this regulation but do not change the intent of the regulation.