

CHAPTER 398

AN ACT exempting disabled veterans from beach buggy permit fees, and amending P.L.1955, c.49 and P.L.1983, c.324.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.1955, c.49 (C.40:61-22.20) is amended to read as follows:

C.40:61-22.20 Municipal control over beaches, etc., fees.

1. a. The governing body of any municipality bordering on the Atlantic Ocean, tidal water bays or rivers which owns or shall acquire, by any deed of dedication or otherwise, lands bordering on the ocean, tidal water bays or rivers, or easement rights therein, for a place of resort for public health and recreation and for other public purposes shall have the exclusive control, government and care thereof and of any boardwalk, bathing and recreational facilities, safeguards and equipment, now or hereafter constructed or provided thereon, and may, by ordinance, make and enforce rules and regulations for the government and policing of such lands, boardwalk, bathing facilities, safeguards and equipment; provided, that such power of control, government, care and policing shall not be construed in any manner to exclude or interfere with the operation of any State law or authority with respect to such lands, property and facilities. Any such municipality may, in order to provide funds to improve, maintain and police the same and to protect the same from erosion, encroachment and damage by sea or otherwise, and to provide facilities and safeguards for public bathing and recreation, including the employment of lifeguards, by ordinance, make and enforce rules and regulations for the government, use, maintenance and policing thereof and provide for the charging and collecting of reasonable fees for the registration of persons using said lands and bathing facilities, for access to the beach and bathing and recreational grounds so provided and for the use of the bathing and recreational facilities, but no such fees shall be charged or collected from children under the age of 12 years.

b. A municipality may by ordinance provide that no fees, or reduced fees, shall be charged to:

- (1) persons 65 or more years of age;
- (2) persons who meet the disability criteria for disability benefits under Title II of the federal Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. s.401 et seq.);
- (3) persons in active military service in any of the Armed Forces of the United States and to their spouse or dependent children over the age of 12 years;
- (4) persons who are active members of the New Jersey National Guard who have completed Initial Active Duty Training and to their spouse or dependent children over the age of 12 years. As used in this paragraph, "Initial Active Duty Training" means Basic Military Training, for members of the New Jersey Air National Guard, and Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, for members of the New Jersey Army National Guard;
- (5) persons who have served in any of the Armed Forces of the United States and who were discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable and who either have served at least 90 days in active duty or have been discharged or released from active duty by reason of a service-incurred injury or disability. The Adjutant General of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs shall promulgate rules and regulations pertaining to veteran eligibility under this paragraph; and

(6) persons holding a driver's license or identification card with a Gold Star Family designation issued pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2013, c.165 (C.39:3-10f6) or section 2 of P.L.1980, c.47 (C.39:3-29.3), respectively.

c. A municipality providing for no fees or reduced fees pursuant to paragraph (3), (4), (5), or (6) of subsection b. of this section shall track, in a manner deemed appropriate by the governing body of the municipality, the number of persons who qualify under the provisions of those paragraphs.

d. A person who qualifies for free access to beaches and bathing and recreational grounds and free use of bathing and recreational facilities pursuant to paragraph (3), (4), (5), or (6) of subsection b. of this section may, in lieu of obtaining and presenting a municipal beach tag or similar admission pass to gain such access and use, present a valid military identification card, form DD-214 or similar document, or State driver's license or identification card indicating that the holder is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States or a Gold Star Family member.

e. A municipality that issues a permit to operate a motorized vehicle on a beach shall not charge a disabled veteran a fee to obtain, replace, or renew the permit.

For purposes of this section, "disabled veteran" means any resident of the State who has been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States and who has been declared by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, or its successor, to have a service-connected disability of any degree.

2. Section 12 of P.L.1983, c.324 (C.13:1L-12) is amended to read as follows:

C.13:1L-12 Free admission for certain individuals to State parks, forests.

12. a. The department shall not charge an admission fee for entrance into a State park or forest by any resident of the State of 62 or more years of age or who is totally disabled or who is an active member of the New Jersey National Guard who has completed Initial Active Duty Training. The department shall prescribe by regulation the types of evidence that may be used to qualify persons for the benefits of this subsection.

b. The department shall not charge a disabled veteran a fee to obtain, replace, or renew a permit to operate a motorized vehicle on a State park beach.

c. As used in this section:

"Disabled veteran" means any resident of the State who has been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States and who has been declared by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, or its successor, to have a service-connected disability of any degree.

"Initial Active Duty Training" means Basic Military Training, for members of the New Jersey Air National Guard, and Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, for members of the New Jersey Army National Guard.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 21, 2020.