

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2819

C 87 L 98

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring display of a vehicle use permit while using department of fish and wildlife improved access facilities.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Buck, Regala and Chandler; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

House Committee on Natural Resources
Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Parks

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife owns and manages property in the state, and the department also owns and manages more than 600 improved access facilities. The access facilities are areas specifically created for vehicle parking; more than half of these have a boat launch or a boat ramp associated with the parking area. A person 16 years of age or older who wishes to use Department of Fish and Wildlife lands or access facilities and who does not already have a hunting, fishing, trapping, or free license from the department must purchase a conservation license. A spouse, children under 18 years of age, and youth groups may use department lands and access facilities without possessing their own licenses if they are accompanied by a license holder. A violation of this licensing requirement is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$500 or up to 90 days in county jail or both.

A conservation license costs \$10 per year. The department estimates that, for the period 1987 to 1996, an average of 902 licenses have been sold annually. License revenues are deposited in the wildlife fund.

Summary: A conservation license is no longer required for users of Department of Fish and Wildlife lands. Instead of a conservation license, users of department improved access facilities with a motor vehicle may be required to display a current annual fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit on the motor vehicle. An improved access facility is a clearly identified area specifically created for motor vehicle parking and includes any boat ramp or boat launch associated with the parking area; the parking area at the Gorge Concert Center is expressly excluded. The permit is issued in the form of a decal, which must be displayed on the motor vehicle before entering and using the improved access facility. Failure to display the vehicle use permit is an infraction rather than a misdemeanor, and the penalty for the infraction is \$66.

Youth groups may use department improved access facilities without possessing a permit when accompanied by a permit holder.

One vehicle use permit decal will be issued at no charge with the issuance of an annual state saltwater, freshwater, combination, small game hunting, big game hunting, and trapping license. The annual fee for a vehicle use permit purchased separately is \$10. A person to whom the department has issued a decal or who has purchased a decal separately may purchase a decal for each additional vehicle the person owns at a cost of \$5 per decal upon showing proof to the department that the person owns the additional vehicle or vehicles. Revenues from permit sales continue to be deposited in the wildlife fund but must be used solely for the stewardship and maintenance of the improved access facilities.

The department may accept contributions into the wildlife fund for the sound stewardship of fish and wildlife. Such contributors are deemed "conservation patrons." A conservation patron who contributes \$20 or more receives a free vehicle use permit.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 94 4
Senate 46 0 (Senate amended)
House 95 0 (House concurred)

Effective: January 1, 1999