

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1017

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permits.

Brief Description: Concerning lands vehicle use permits.

Sponsors: Representatives Pennington and Mielke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/7/01, 2/26/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to issue one lands use permit with the initial purchase of an annual hunting or fishing license, but not with the purchase of subsequent licenses.
- Allows for the purchase of additional lands use decals without having to show proof of ownership of additional vehicles.
- Requires that the lands use permit be issued in a form that is transferable between various vehicles.
- Reduces the penalty for failure to display a lands use permit from \$66 to \$30 after the violator proves to the court that he or she purchased a lands use permit within 15 days of receiving the violation.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Doumit, Democratic Co-Chair; Sump, Republican Co-Chair; Pearson, Republican Vice Chair; Rockefeller, Democratic Vice Chair; Buck, G. Chandler, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, Murray and Pennington.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The WDFW manages over 800,000 acres of wildlife habitat, many of which have improved access areas for parking, and over 600 boating and fishing access sites on Washington's lakes, rivers, and streams. These lands are open to the public for such activities as hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation. Prior to April 1999, a person wishing to use these lands that did not purchase a hunting or fishing license was required to purchase a \$10 Conservation License. In 1998 the Legislature eliminated the personally held Conservation License, and replaced it with a Vehicle Specific Lands Access Permit (VSLAP).

All persons using one of the WDFW's 249 approved access facilities, such as a parking area or a boat launch, is required to have a VSLAP or (decal) displayed on their vehicle. The permit is issued by the WDFW, and is in the form of a permanently affixed decal. The decal must then be displayed in the rear window of the user's vehicle.

Any person purchasing a hunting, fishing, trapping, or combination license is issued one decal at no additional cost. If a person wishes to access WDFW land without purchasing a hunting, fishing, trapping, or combination license, he or she may purchase a decal from any of the WDFW's authorized license dealers for the cost of \$10. Decals are not transferable between different vehicles. Any person who has received a decal with their sporting license, or has purchased a decal individually, may purchase additional decals at a reduced price for each vehicle they can prove to the WDFW they own. The cost of additional decals is \$5 each.

Failure to display the vehicle lands access permit, or decal, while on WDFW managed lands is punishable by a fine of \$66.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The WDFW is required to issue one vehicle lands use permit with the initial purchase of an annual hunting or fishing license. Additional complimentary permits would not be included with the purchase of subsequent annual licenses. Additional lands use decals could be purchased without having to show proof of ownership of additional vehicles. The lands use permit is no longer issued in the form of a permanent decal. It must be issued in a form that is transferable between various vehicles, with space for the license plate number of each vehicle.

The penalty for failure to display a lands use permit is reduced from \$66 to \$30 after the violator proves to the court that he or she purchased a lands use permit within 15 days of receiving the violation.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill requires the department to issue two vehicle lands use permits with every hunting or fishing license issued and reduces the penalty for failure to display a permit by \$10 upon showing of proof to the department that a permit was purchased within 30 days.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original bill) This bill brings common sense to the permit process. The current fine is excessive.

Testimony Against: (Original bill) The length of time between the issuance of a violation and the purchase of a decal to offset the fine should be minimal. The permit process discourages hunting and fishing and should be modified or abolished.

Testified: (In support) Representative Pennington, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Bruce Crawford, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.