

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5438

As Passed Senate, March 10, 2001

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

Brief Description: Giving the fish and wildlife commission rule-making authority over the fish and wildlife vehicle use permit program.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Regala and Oke; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 1/29/01, 2/5/01 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/10/01, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5438 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Spanel, Vice Chair; Constantine, Hargrove, McDonald, Morton, Oke, Snyder and Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: Use of certain improved fish and wildlife access facilities is limited to hunters, fishers, and others who have purchased an access decal for their vehicle. Improved access facilities include parking areas and boat ramps. The purchase of a hunting or fishing license includes an access decal without extra charge. Nonhunters and nonfishers must pay \$10 for the first decal and \$5 for each additional decal. Decals are valid for one year.

Statutes governing the program are very specific and difficulties have arisen in the administration of the program. For example, there is a disparity in how extra decals are given to licensees. Some users have objected to being required to permanently affix the decal to their vehicle. Also, concerns have been raised about the difficulty of preventing licensees from giving extra decals to unlicensed users.

Summary of Bill: One access permit is issued at the initial purchase of a hunting or fishing license. It need not be a decal which is affixed permanently to the vehicle. Additional permits are \$5 each, regardless of an individual's licensing status or vehicle ownership.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission is authorized to adopt rules to implement, administer, and enforce the access permit program, limited to rules relating to the issuance and display of permits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The current law governing this program is too cumbersome to be workable. Many citizens don't like having to affix the decal to their autos. Changes in technology and consumer demand could be more effectively and quickly addressed if the department were given the flexibility in this bill. Rule-making authority ought to be more specific.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Grant Nelson, Association of Washington Business (neutral); Bruce Crawford, Josh Weiss, Department of Fish and Wildlife (pro).

House Amendment(s): Instead of requiring a decal, the department may create a vehicle use permit and one will be free with the initial purchase of a license. An additional use permit may be purchased for \$5, but the initial use permit may also be transferred between two vehicles and must contain space for the vehicle license numbers. The penalty for failing to clearly display the permit is \$60 but it will be reduced to \$30 if the owner provides proof to the court that a vehicle use permit has been purchased within 15 days after the violation.