

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6271

As of January 31, 2002

Title: An act relating to the creation of a state evergreen recreation pass program.

Brief Description: Creating the evergreen recreation pass.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Parks & Shorelines: 2/6/02.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS & SHORELINES

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: User fees are one method of increasing funding for operating and maintaining public recreation sites. There are three state agencies that manage lands open for public access and recreation: the Department of Fish and Wildlife; the Department of Natural Resources; and the State Parks and Recreation Commission. Of these agencies, the Department of Fish and Wildlife is the only agency to currently require a vehicle use permit at access sites. The permit is issued at no charge with all annual fishing and hunting licenses. The annual fee for the vehicle permit, if purchased separately, is \$10.

The State Parks and Recreation Commission proposed a day-use fee for selected state parks in 2001. However, the Legislature did not provide appropriation authority for any additional funds, so the commission chose not to implement the fee. There are no fees for use of public lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

Concerns have been raised that multiple recreation passes would be confusing to the public and could deter public use of state lands.

Summary of Bill: A renewable, annual "Evergreen Recreation Pass" is created for use at any recreation sites owned by State Parks, the Department of Natural Resources, or Department of Fish and Wildlife where a pass is required. The cost of the pass cannot exceed \$15. The pass must be made available if more than one agency decides to require a day-use pass. A person has the option of purchasing a single-agency pass, or the multi-agency Evergreen Recreation Pass.

The Evergreen Recreation Pass must be made available by any agency requiring a day-use pass, and by the Department of Licensing through car license tab renewals. The agencies and Department of Licensing must encourage the person purchasing the pass to answer questions regarding how often they are likely to use the pass and which agency land they are likely to visit. This information is provided to the Office of Financial Management for use in developing a formula for the distribution of revenues from pass sales. At least 75 percent of the funds collected must be used for maintenance and repair of recreation sites.

Failure to display the Evergreen Recreation Pass in a vehicle parked at a recreation site is an infraction, with a penalty of \$66. The penalty may be reduced to \$30 if the owner of the vehicle purchases an Evergreen Recreation Pass within 15 days of the notice of violation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2002.

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