

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5111

As of January 30, 2003

Title: An act relating to the evergreen recreation pass.

Brief Description: Creating the evergreen recreation pass.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, Jacobsen, Swecker, Regala, Fraser, Shin, Spanel, Kohl-Welles, Haugen and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 2/3/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: The State Parks and Recreation Commission recently implemented a day-use parking fee of \$5 per day, or \$50 for an annual pass. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) charges \$10 for the annual fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit, or the permit is provided free of charge with all hunting and fishing licenses. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) currently does not charge fees for parking at its recreation sites. Presently there is no mechanism to establish a single pass that could be used at all state-owned recreation sites.

Public or private landowners are not liable for unintentional injuries to members of the public who use the land for outdoor recreation, if no fee is charged. State Parks and Recreation Commission and WDFW vehicle use and parking permits are not considered a fee for purposes of recreational immunity.

The State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force developed several recommendations for the Legislature's consideration, including a proposal for an optional, consolidated recreation pass.

Summary of Bill: The evergreen recreation pass is created as a renewable, annual parking permit that can be used in place of parking fees charged at recreation sites owned by the State Parks and Recreation Commission, DNR, and WDFW beginning January 1, 2004. DNR is authorized to charge a fee for parking motor vehicles at designated recreation sites. Purchase of the evergreen recreation pass is optional.

The initial cost of the evergreen recreation pass may not exceed \$35, and may be increased based upon the fiscal growth factor. The evergreen recreation pass must be made available by each agency requiring an annual or day use parking permit, and the Department of Licensing also must offer the pass for purchase in each notice of license tab renewal.

Agencies participating in the evergreen recreation pass may enter into agreements with federal agencies and neighboring states to develop a regional recreation pass. Agencies are required to develop a proposal for a joint state and federal recreation pass by December 1, 2003 and report their findings to the Legislature.

Agencies may develop premium passes that combine additional licenses and services that may include camping, boat launch and moorage, hunting, and fishing.

The evergreen recreation pass must be displayed so it is visible from outside of the motor vehicle. Failure to display a pass is a natural resource infraction subject to a \$66 penalty. Penalties may be reduced to \$10 if the registered owner provides proof that an annual parking permit has been purchased within 15 days after the violation.

Revenues collected in 2004 are distributed as follows: 50 percent to State Parks, and 25 percent each to DNR and WDFW. In 2005, revenues from the sale of the evergreen pass are distributed to agencies based on visitation to agency lands by purchasers of the pass during 2004. Visitation is determined by a survey conducted by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation in 2004 that is updated every four years. Monies received from the sale of the pass must be used for operation, maintenance, repair, and equipment for recreation sites.

The evergreen recreation pass is a permit issued for statewide use and is not considered a fee for purposes of recreational immunity.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 16, 2003.

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