

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5775

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Parks, Fish & Wildlife, February 18, 2003

Title: An act relating to state parks and outdoor recreation funding.

Brief Description: Providing funding for state parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

Sponsors: Senators Oke, Doumit, Swecker, Carlson, McAuliffe, Rasmussen, Winsley, Regala, Brown, Prentice, Fairley, Schmidt, Kohl-Welles, Shin and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Parks, Fish & Wildlife: 2/17/03, 2/18/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PARKS, FISH & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5775 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Sheahan, Vice Chair; Doumit, Jacobsen, Morton, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: Currently, there is an annual watercraft excise tax of .5 percent on most non-commercial boats over 16 feet in length based on the fair market value. The Washington State Tax Structure Committee report released in December 2002 recommended extending the watercraft excise tax to motor homes and travel trailers.

The State Parks and Recreation Commission recently implemented a day-use parking fee of \$5 per day, or \$50 for an annual pass.

The State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Funding Task Force recommended that the Legislature consider extending the watercraft excise tax to motor homes and travel trailers.

Summary of Substitute Bill: An excise tax of 0.8 percent is imposed on motor homes, travel trailers or campers. Several categories of motor homes, travel trailers, and campers are exempt from the tax, including unoccupied inventory held for sale and government property. The excise tax may be paid to the Department of Licensing at the time of registration, or may be paid to the Department of Revenue at some later time. The Department of Revenue must prepare a depreciation schedule at least once a year for motor homes, travel trailers, and campers.

Revenue from the excise tax on motor homes, travel trailers, and campers is deposited in the parks and outdoor recreation lands investment account. Funds in the account must be used for operation, maintenance, and capital improvements of parks and outdoor recreation lands as follows: 60 percent to the State Parks and Recreation Commission, 20 percent to the

Department of Fish and Wildlife, and 20 percent to the Department of Natural Resources. Any revenues collected by State Parks through a vehicle parking fee must be deducted from State Parks appropriation from the parks and outdoor recreation lands investment account.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Sections of the original bill creating an evergreen recreation pass and prohibiting state park day use fees are deleted. Allocation of funds in the parks and outdoor recreation lands investment account is specified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Testimony For: This bill provides critical funding for outdoor recreation lands. Without it we will see continued limitations and closures of public use of state lands. To keep delaying finding a new funding source is to say Washington will no longer have a functioning park system. Fifty percent of the use of WDFW access areas is by recreational vehicles. Many people with recreational vehicles rely on WDFW, DNR and State Parks to provide access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Testimony Against: RVs that use public areas already pay for use through camping fees. The majority of RV owners don't use state parks. It is not fair to put the responsibility for financing the state park system on a small number of people who rarely use the parks.

Testified: Frank Gummersall, Family Motor Coach Assn. (con); Ric Abbett, Trout Unlimited (pro); Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation (pro); Mark Quinn, WDFW; Jeff Koenings, WDFW (pro); Nin Carter, Audubon Society (pro); Bonnie Bunning, Dept. of Natural Resources (pro); Gary and Sandra Worthington, former owners Cama Beach State Park (pro); Bart Preecs (pro); Roy Bernd, Wally Byam Caravan Club (Airstream) (con); Stu Halsan, Recreation Vehicle Industry Assn (con); Jonathan Guzzo, Washington Trails Association (pro); Lynn Maier, WPEA (pro); Rex Derr, State Parks (pro).