

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2339

As Reported by House Committee On: Ways & Means

Title: An act relating to requiring the department of licensing to collect a donation to benefit the state parks system as part of motor vehicle registration unless a vehicle owner opts not to provide a donation.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of licensing to collect a donation to benefit the state parks system as part of motor vehicle registration unless a vehicle owner opts not to provide a donation.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, Seaquist, Roberts, Williams, Simpson, Nelson, Ormsby, Dunshee, Goodman, Pedersen, Cody, Hasegawa, Kirby, Maxwell, Upthegrove, Finn, Eddy, Hunt, Orwall, Rolfes, Morrell, Kenney, Clibborn, Morris, Green, Kagi, Chase, Sells, Wood, Flannigan, Ericks, McCoy, Campbell, Appleton, Pettigrew, White, Blake, Linville, Wallace, Conway, Carlyle, Miloscia, Takko, O'Brien, Hurst and Van De Wege.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ways & Means: 4/14/09, 4/18/09 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Licensing to collect a donation of \$5 for the state park system from all vehicle owners during vehicle registration renewals coming due after September 1, 2009, unless the vehicle owner indicates that he or she intends not to participate in the donation program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Seaquist and Sullivan.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dammeier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Hinkle, Priest, Ross and Schmick.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff: Owen Rowe (786-7391)

Background:

Most motor vehicles in the state are required to be registered with the Department of Licensing (DOL). Vehicle registrations must be renewed annually with the DOL, during which time the owner of the vehicle has the option to make a \$5 donation to the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission). The owner of the vehicle must actively choose to add a donation onto the vehicle registration renewal.

All donations collected through vehicle registration renewals are deposited into the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account (Account). This Account may be used to operate state parks, develop and renovate park facilities, undertake deferred maintenance, and accomplish other park purposes.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The DOL is directed to collect a donation of at least \$5 for the state park system from all vehicle owners during vehicle registration renewals coming due after September 1, 2009. The donation to the state parks system may not be collected from any vehicle owner who indicates, at the time of vehicle registration renewal, that he or she intends not to participate in the donation program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The DOL is directed to collect a \$5 donation, and not at least a \$5 donation, to support the operation of state parks on vehicle registrations. The DOL must ensure that the opt-out donation is displayed both clearly and visibly in both paper and on-line vehicle registration renewals. The date that the DOL is directed to begin the new donation program is moved from July 1, 2009, to September 1, 2009. The emergency clause is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill supports a longtime Commission interest in dedicated revenue for state parks. The bill has the ultimate goal of keeping parks open for the public. There are a few challenges in start-up that may result in significantly less revenue during the first year. If the bill takes effect in December, this could translate to a \$6.5 million loss in funding for state

parks. Any loss in revenue could make it impossible for all state parks to remain open as directed by a proviso in the House of Representative's budget. This is a prudent innovative idea and is not a fee, nor a new tax, it's a voluntary donation. An alternative to this bill would be to close parks. For many families, the only vacation they will take this summer will be to a state park. State parks are particularly important in rural areas of the state where they help to boost tourism, and therefore are important to county fiscal health.

(With concerns) The DOL has concerns about the proposed implementation date of July 1, 2009. The DOL is aware of the importance of this revenue to state parks. Renewal notices for vehicle registrations to be due on or after July 1, 2009, are mailed in May 2009. The DOL will require 3.25 months to test several computer systems to handle the new donation process. The DOL suggests the following changes to the bill: the section that applies to registrations should read "due, or to become due, no later than December 2009." Additionally, the DOL asks that a fixed donation amount be included in the bill.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Josh Weiss, Washington State Association of Counties; Alia Griffing and Brian Yearout, Washington Federation of State Employees; and Rex Derr and Ilene Frisch, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

(With concerns) Glenn Ball and Toni Wilson, Department of Licensing.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.