

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6023

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation, February 23, 2009

Title: An act relating to accessing lands for outdoor recreation.

Brief Description: Concerning accessing lands for outdoor recreation.

Sponsors: Senator Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/19/09, 2/23/09 [DPS, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6023 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Hargrove, Hatfield and Swecker.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Stevens.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages nearly a million acres of wildlife habitat and more than 150 water access sites. These lands provide wildlife protection while also allowing wildlife viewing, hiking, water sports, hunting, fishing, and other compatible recreation.

A Vehicle Use Permit is required to be displayed when using these recreation access sites. Improved access facilities are identified areas specifically created for vehicle parking and recreation use activities.

Currently, a Vehicle Use Permit costs \$10.95 for the year. Hunters and fishers get a Vehicle Use Permit without additional cost, as part of their license purchase. Prominent red and white regulatory signs are placed at sites where a Vehicle Use Permit is required.

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.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Persons with a motor vehicle displaying a Washington's Wildlife, Wild on Washington, Endangered Wildlife, or a personalized license plate authorized by the Department of Licensing do not need to display a current Vehicle Use Permit when using WDFW recreation access sites.

The annual fee for a Vehicle Use Permit increases to \$20 when the bill becomes effective; to \$25 on July 2, 2011; and to \$30 beginning July 1, 2013. A person may purchase a second Vehicle Use Permit for \$10 instead of the current \$5.

Revenue from the sale of the Vehicle Use Permits may be used for maintenance and physical improvements to land managed by WDFW.

WDFW is authorized to develop information that is accessible through WDFW's website that promotes outdoor recreational and wildlife viewing opportunities. WDFW may limit the access to this internet information to individuals who purchase certain recreational licenses and Vehicle Use Permits.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):

- Allows individuals who purchase a wildlife or personalized license plate to park at WDFW land access sites without having to display a Vehicle Use Permit;
- Increases the cost of a Vehicle Use Permit from \$10 to \$20 in Fiscal Year 2010, to \$25 in Fiscal Year 2011, and to \$30 in Fiscal Year 2014;
- Increases the cost of a second Vehicle Use Permit from \$5 to \$10;
- Allows WDFW to use revenue generated from Vehicle Use Permits for land maintenance and physical improvements;
- Authorizes WDFW to develop information relating to land access on its Internet website and limit the Internet access to individuals who have purchased a recreational license from WDFW.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: OTHER: The WDFW would like to merge this concept with the house bill that increases the cost of a Vehicle Use Permit in steps from \$10 to \$30. The house bill version also provides WDFW with the ability to provide enhanced website access with special features to persons holding a Vehicle Use Permit or recreational license.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Steve Pozzanghera, WDFW.