

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5977

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters, January 9, 2012
Ways & Means, January 17, 2012

Title: An act relating to making the discover pass transferable between two vehicles.

Brief Description: Making the discover pass transferable between two vehicles.

Sponsors: Senators Ranker, Litzow, Eide, Shin, Haugen, Rolfes, Swecker, Fain, Frockt, Hobbs, Schoesler, Fraser, Kilmer, Kohl-Welles, Chase, Hatfield, Nelson, Harper, Regala, Hargrove, Tom, Pridemore, Keiser, Conway, Kline, McAuliffe, Sheldon, Parlette, Hewitt, Honeyford, Roach, Carrell and Pflug.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters: 12/14/11, 1/09/12 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 1/17/12 [DPS(ENRM)].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5977 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Ranker, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Fraser, Murray and Swecker.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5977 as recommended by Committee on Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Murray, Chair; Kilmer, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member Capital; Baumgartner, Conway, Fraser, Harper, Hatfield, Hewitt, Holmquist Newbry, Honeyford, Kastama, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Padden, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler and Tom.

Staff: Michael Bezanson (786-7449)

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.

Background: Discover Pass Program Generally. During the 2011 regular session, the Legislature passed 2SSB 5622 which generally requires an annual Discover Pass or day-use permit for access to certain recreation lands managed by the State Parks & Recreation Commission (State Parks), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW).

The legislation also created the DFW Vehicle Access Pass, which is issued along with certain hunting and fishing licenses, and which allows access to DFW managed lands.

Non-transferability of the Discover Pass. The 2011 legislation sets the statutory fee for a Discover Pass "per motor vehicle" and requires that it contain space for the motor vehicle license plate number. In implementing the Discover Pass program, State Parks, DNR, and DFW have interpreted this language as allowing a Discover Pass to be used for a single motor vehicle.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Provides for Discover Pass Transferability Between Two Motor Vehicles. The Discover Pass and DFW Vehicle Access Pass must each contain space for two motor vehicle license plate numbers, and are valid only for those license plate numbers written on the Pass.

Specifies Provisions for Implementation. A person may not receive a refund for a Discover Pass or DFW Access Pass issued before transferability changes take effect. However, a previously issued Discover Pass or DFW Vehicle Access Pass is valid for two motor vehicle license plate numbers written on a pass.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY ENERGY, NATURAL RESOURCES & MARINE WATERS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Adds consistency for terminology used in the substance and implementation portions of the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters):
Testimony from 2011 Second Special Session.

PRO: This bill would make the Discover Pass transferable to two vehicles. The Discover Pass program is a new one, and this bill is an effort to be responsible to the requests of the public for transferability. Transferability has been the most common issue raised by the public regarding Discover Pass implementation. In the long run, this program will be a major source of revenue to support state lands in Washington. There is a great deal of support for this change, though other adjustments may be necessary in the future, including its application to volunteers and attaching passes to persons instead of vehicles. This legislative action could have a positive impact on Discover Pass revenue, although the Discover Pass alone is not likely to be the sole funding solution on its own.

Persons Testifying (Energy, Natural Resources & Marine Waters):

Persons Testifying from 2011 Second Special Session.

PRO: Don Hoch, State Parks; Jim Putman, Pacific NW Four Wheel Drive Assn.; Daniel Fallstrom, Washington State Snowmobile Assn.; Howard Briggs, Washington State Parks Volunteers; Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Jonathan Guzzo, Washington Trails Assn.; Peter Reid, Washington State Parks Foundation; Gregory Johnson, Friends of Schafer and Lake Sylvia State Parks; Brian Yearoot, Washington Federation of State Employees; Doug Levy, Washington Recreational Boating Assn.; Phil Anderson, DFW; Joan Fleming, Back Country Horsemen; Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means):

Testimony From 2012 Regular Session on Proposed Substitute.

PRO: We support the transferability of the Discover Pass between vehicles. It is unfair to have a pass that only works with one vehicle. Surveys show that the largest public concern with the Discover Pass is that the Pass is not transferable between vehicles. The new approach in this bill is user friendly and overall improves the product. It is hard to know how much revenue this will generate but we believe more people will buy the pass as a result.

We do not think that State Parks should lose its general fund state support and become user fee supported. Parks will remain open but at what costs. Parks are our crown jewel.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):

Persons Testifying From 2012 Regular Session on Proposed Substitute.

PRO: Jim King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Peter Reid, WA State Parks Foundation; Jonathan Guzzo, WA Trails Assn; Brian Yearoot, WA Federation of State Employees.