

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5897

As of Second Reading

Title: An act relating to state parks.

Brief Description: Concerning state parks.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator Pearson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

None.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the sale of the Discover Pass at a discounted rate for sales, bundling, and partnership opportunities.
- Provides an exception for the Discover Pass requirements for motor vehicles operating on certain roads managed by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Provides \$5 million per fiscal year from the Waste, Reduction, Recycling and Litter Control Act through fiscal year 2017 for the operation and maintenance of state parks.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

Discover Pass.

In 2011 the Legislature created the Discover Pass to help recover the costs for the operation and management of state lands used for recreational activities. The Discover Pass establishes a user fee for motor vehicle access to recreational areas managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) (collectively "the agencies").

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.

A Discover Pass costs \$30 per year and may be used on up to two vehicles. A day-use permit is also available for \$10 per day. All money received from the Discover Pass and day-use permit sales are deposited into a special account and distributed to the agencies on a proportional basis, as established in statute.

The Discover Pass or day-use permit is required for a motor vehicle to operate on any recreational site or lands or to park at a recreational area. The Discover Pass or day-use permit is not required for nonrecreational uses of agency lands if the use is consistent with a written authorization from the agency. Each agency must designate short-term parking areas, where applicable, that are exempt from Discover Pass or day-use permit requirements.

Certain passes and permits issued by the agencies exempt the user from the Discover Pass and day-use permit requirements, including: the Vehicle Access Pass issued by the DFW to persons who purchase certain hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing permits; camper registrations; the Annual Natural Investment Permit issued by the State Parks; and a Sno-Park seasonal permit issued by the State Parks for access to designated parks during the wintertime.

The Discover Pass and day-use permit may be made available for purchase directly from the State Parks, the DFW, the Department of Licensing, or other outlets authorized to sell state licenses, permits, or passes. The agencies also may provide the Discover Pass or day-use permits to vendors for retail sale at the established statutory price.

Litter Tax.

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Act, of 1971, prohibits littering and establishes statewide programs to prevent and clean up litter, reduce waste, and increase recycling. These programs are funded by the 0.015 percent litter tax (chapter 82.19 RCW) on retailers' gross proceeds on 13 categories of consumer products. The products subject to the litter tax include groceries, alcoholic beverages, household paper products, glass and metal containers, and toiletries.

The programs funded by the litter tax include litter collection efforts by state agencies, and state assistance of local government waste reduction and recycling programs. The Act also establishes the Ecology Youth Corps program, which employs teens to collect litter from highways, parks, and other public areas, and to recycle collected materials as appropriate.

Litter tax funding is directed to programs as follows:

- 20 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to local city and county waste reduction, recycling, and litter control programs, which are administered by the Department of Ecology (DOE) as the Community Litter Cleanup Program;
- 30 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to the DOE for waste reduction and recycling efforts; and
- 50 percent of litter tax funds are allocated to litter collection efforts by several state agencies, including the departments of Ecology, Transportation, Corrections, Revenue, and Natural Resources. This 50 percent allocation of the litter tax is also used to cover the DOE's costs of coordinating statewide litter control efforts, to conduct a statewide litter survey, and to conduct statewide public awareness programs.

Summary of Bill:

Discover Pass.

The Discover Pass or day-use permit is not required for motor vehicles operating on a road managed by the DNR or the DFW, including a forest or land management road, if the road is not blocked by a gate. This exception does not apply to the State Parks' lands.

The agencies are authorized to sell Discover Passes or day-use permits at a discounted rate below the price established by statute for purposes of:

- bulk sales to retailers;
- agency license and permit product bundling; and
- partnership opportunities to promote the accessibility and visibility of the Discover Pass and recreational opportunities.

Litter Control Tax.

Each fiscal year, beginning in 2014 and through 2017, \$5 million revenues from the Waste Reduction, Recycling and Litter Control Account is distributed to the State Park Renewal and Stewardship Account for purposes of operating and maintaining state parks. The remainder of the litter tax levy collected is distributed to the Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Account, for purposes identified in statute.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed, except for sections 5 through 7 relating to the litter control tax, which contain an emergency clause and take effect July 1, 2013.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) None.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.