

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5080

As of February 1, 2013

Title: An act relating to providing that the vehicle access pass provide access to the department of natural resources' recreation sites.

Brief Description: Regarding access to the department of natural resources' recreation sites.

Sponsors: Senator Ericksen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/24/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: The Discover Pass allows visitors to park or drive in designated recreational areas located on state lands owned or managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks). Visitors to state recreational lands must obtain an annual Discover Pass or a day-use permit allowing vehicle access for one calendar day. The Discover Pass permit is valid for two vehicles for 12 months from the point of purchase at a cost of \$30, while a day-use permit costs \$10. A volunteer who performs 24 hours of service on agency-sanctioned projects in a given year is entitled to receive a complimentary Discover Pass.

There are certain limited exceptions to the requirement to have a Discover Pass. Holders of certain hunting and fishing licenses may access DFW recreation lands and water-access sites if they possess a DFW-provided vehicle access pass. These licenses include the big game hunting license, small game hunting license, western Washington pheasant permit, trapping license, watchable wildlife decal, or combination, saltwater, or freshwater personal use fishing license. One vehicle access pass is provided per license purchase. The pass must contain space for two motor vehicle license plate numbers.

Summary of Bill: A person with a vehicle access pass is entitled to access both DFW and DNR recreation sites or lands.

Appropriation: None.

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.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2013.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: We understand the desire of hunters and fishers to purchase only one pass to access hunting and fishing sites. However, this bill would have an impact on the Discover Pass revenue which would therefore have an impact on State Parks funding. In the original Discover Pass legislation, everyone was going to have to purchase a Discover Pass to access recreational lands. That was changed to allow a vehicle access pass to DFW lands for those purchasing hunting and fishing licenses. This would be a further expansion. We have significant concerns about needed funding to keep parks open. Further, this adds to the already existing confusion by customers as to when a pass is needed.

OTHER: The Discover Pass was created to bring a revenue stream to State Parks, DNR and DFW. Now we need to discuss how to improve that revenue stream and address some of the inequities created by the pass. DNR manages 3.1 million acres across 39 counties. Use occurs not just in designated parking areas, but all across the landscape. Those who use the property often leave a lot of garbage. DNR is dependent on the revenue from the Discover Pass to keep the landscape clean.

Persons Testifying: CON: Joan Fleming, Back Country Horsemen of WA; Tom Riggs, WA State Federation of State Employees.

OTHER: Greg Schirato, DFW; James King, Citizens for Parks and Recreation; Mark Mauren, DNR; Daniel Farber, State Parks