

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5889

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, April 25, 2013

Title: An act relating to snowmobile parking permit and license fees.

Brief Description: Modifying snowmobile parking permit and license fees.

Sponsors: Senators Nelson, Schlicher, Fain, Hatfield, Hewitt, Fraser and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 4/25/13 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5889 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Baumgartner, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Nelson, Assistant Ranking Member; Bailey, Becker, Conway, Dammeier, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Schoesler and Tom.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Padden and Rivers.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Braun.

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) administers a winter recreation program that includes 120 sno-parks statewide. Approximately 80 of these sno-parks are used primarily for snowmobile trail access and the other 40 provide non-motorized trail access for cross-country skiers. The snowmobile program and the non-motorized program are separately funded and must be financially self supporting. The snowmobile program is funded from snowmobile registration fees and a percentage of the state gasoline tax, which is \$0.23 per gallon of fuel, based on 135 gallons of fuel usage per year per registered snowmobile. The non-motorized program is funded by the proceeds from the sno-park parking permit fees. The Snowmobile Advisory Committee and the Winter Recreation Advisory Committee advise the Commission on the use of funds for costs

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associated with snow removal, trail grooming, enforcement, equipment purchases, safety education, and program administration.

Generally, snowmobiles must be registered with the Department of Licensing (DOL) if owned and operated in the state, and display a snowmobile decal. The initial fee and annual registration fee is \$30. The owner of a registered snowmobile receives a free annual sno-park permit. A vintage snowmobile is defined as a snowmobile that was manufactured at least 30 years ago. The registration fee for a vintage snowmobile is \$12 annually.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): The snowmobile initial and renewal registration fees are increased from \$30 to \$40 until October 1, 2014, for registrations due on October 1, 2013. The snowmobile initial and renewal registration fees are increased from \$40 to \$50 for registrations due on or after October 1, 2014.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):

- Removes section one of the bill allowing the Commission to require a fee for the sno-park permit for registered snowmobile owners.
- Changes the dates for the increased registration fees to October 1, 2013 and the second increase to be on or after October 1, 2014.

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: PRO: This bill will allow me to pay more for my snowmobile registration which in turn will help maintain the Snowmobile Program. Fees have not been increased for snowmobiles since 2002. With increased costs and inflation, more money is needed for maintaining our trails at a higher standard. The Snowmobile Advisory Committee looked at three ways to generate more revenue: 1) increase the amount of the gas tax refund; 2) increase the registration fees; or 3) charge snowmobilers for the sno-park permit. The survey of club members and families overwhelmingly supported the increased registration fees. We support the house version of this bill and would recommend that the first section of the bill be removed and that the start date for the new registration fee be October 1, 2013.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Merle Steinman Jr., Richard Elkins, Tony DiPangrazio, Terry Kohl, WA State Snowmobile Assn.; Wayne McLaughlin, WA State Parks and Recreation Commission.