
Environment Committee

HB 1826

Brief Description: Creating flexibility in the state's recreational fee-for-access programs to better accommodate families that recreate with multiple vehicles.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson and Blake.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows only one vehicle accessing state recreational sites or lands to display a Discover Pass or day-use permit if both vehicles listed on the displayed Discover Pass or day-use permit are accessing the same recreational site or land at the same time.
- Changes the authority to offer a family Discover Pass that is fully transferrable among vehicles with common family ownership from discretionary to mandatory.

Hearing Date: 2/10/15

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

A public access pass is required to be displayed on any vehicle accessing most lands managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) or by the departments of Natural Resources or Fish and Wildlife (state recreation agencies). The pass must either be a Discover Pass or a Vehicle Access Pass. A Discover Pass costs \$30 for an annual pass or \$10 for a day-use permit. The Vehicle Access Pass is available free of charge to anyone who purchases certain hunting or fishing licenses and only allows access to lands managed by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

A Discover Pass or day-use permit must be visibly displayed on any motor vehicle accessing state recreational sites or lands. Each Discover Pass has space to list up to two motor vehicle license plate numbers, and to be valid, the license plate on the car must match one of the two numbers written on the Discover Pass.

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.

The state recreation agencies have the authority to offer a family Discover Pass that is fully transferable among vehicles and does not require the placement of a license plate number on the pass to be valid. However, the state recreation agencies have decided not to exercise this authority. If the state recreation agencies decide in the future to offer a family Discover Pass, they must collectively set a price for the sale of a family Discover Pass that is no more than fifty dollars.

Revenue from the sales of Discover Passes and Vehicle Access Passes are deposited into the Recreation Pass Account and distributed to the state recreation agencies according to a set formula. Of the first \$71 million of recreation pass sales, 84 percent is distributed to the Commission and the remainder is equally divided between the Department of Natural Resources and the WDFW. All sales above \$71 million are distributed equally among the three state recreation agencies.

Unlawfully accessing state recreational sites and lands without a valid recreation pass is a \$99 civil infraction. That penalty is reduced to \$59, if a Discover Pass is purchased within 15 days of the violation.

Summary of Bill:

Accessing Lands.

Only one vehicle accessing state recreational sites or lands is required to display a Discover Pass or day-use permit if both vehicles listed on the displayed Discover Pass or day-use permit are accessing the same recreational site or land at the same time. The owner or user of the vehicle not displaying the Discover Pass or day-use permit must, either upon demand or citation, be able to demonstrate that a valid Discover Pass or day-use permit, showing the license plate number for both vehicles, is present on the recreational site or land.

Family Discover Pass.

The discretion for the state recreation agencies to offer a family Discover Pass that is fully transferable among vehicles and does not require the placement of a license plate number on the pass to be valid is removed, resulting in a requirement that a family Discover Pass be offered by no later than January 1, 2016. The family Discover Pass may only be transferrable among vehicles with common family ownerships.

The purchase price of a family Discover Pass is no longer limited to \$50. Instead, the state recreation agencies may set a sales price intended to at least compensate for the corresponding reduction in individual Discover Pass sales.

The state recreation agencies must report family Discover Pass implementation details to the Legislature by January 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 2, 2015.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.