

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5205

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environment

Title: An act relating to allowing spouses to combine volunteer hours for purposes of receiving a complimentary discover pass.

Brief Description: Allowing spouses to combine volunteer hours for purposes of receiving a complimentary discover pass.

Sponsors: Senators Becker, Parlette and Warnick.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment: 3/17/15, 3/30/15 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a married couple to combine their volunteer service hours in order to meet the 24 hours of volunteer time required to earn a complimentary Discover Pass.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; Shea, Ranking Minority Member; Short, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Farrell, Goodman, Harris, McBride, Pike and Taylor.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

A public access pass is required to be displayed on any vehicle accessing a state park or recreational lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources or the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). 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 pass. The Vehicle Access Pass is available free of charge to anyone who purchases certain hunting or fishing licenses

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and only allows access to lands managed by the DFW. All public access passes must display the license plate number of the vehicle accessing the recreational land.

One free Discover Pass can be earned by any person who performs at least 24 hours of volunteer service that benefits state recreational lands. The volunteer service must be sanctioned by one of the agencies.

Summary of Bill:

A married couple may count the combined volunteer service hours of each individual towards the 24 hours required to earn a complementary Discover Pass.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Volunteer groups do much of the trail and bridge maintenance on state recreation lands. Volunteering is a significant time commitment and also includes spending time in mandatory training before they can even get out onto the land.

The small fiscal impact is insignificant given the value to the state provided by volunteer labor. The small adjustment to the volunteer program will increase the number of volunteers spending time on state lands and induce more people into volunteering.

There is an issue around how to handle Discover Pass exemptions and fee reductions going forward. The current process is not comprehensive, consistent, or rational.

(Opposed) None.

(Information only) There would not be an open state park system if not for the hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours committed each year. Allowing spouses to combine their volunteer hours would have a minimal effect on Discover Pass revenues. The affected agencies would not verify marital status and instead take the word of the applicants for the complementary Discover Pass.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Becker, prime sponsor; and Todd Petersen, Northwest Motorcycle Association and Washington Off Highway Vehicle Alliance.

(Information only) Daniel Farber, State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.