

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5137

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, January 28, 2015

Title: An act relating to providing a complimentary discover pass to veterans with a one hundred percent service-connected disability.

Brief Description: Providing a complimentary discover pass to veterans with a one hundred percent service-connected disability.

Sponsors: Senators Hatfield, Pearson, Hobbs, Chase, Conway, Roach, McAuliffe, O'Ban and Mullet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/21/15, 1/28/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Dandel, Vice Chair; Hatfield, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hewitt, McAuliffe and Warnick.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

Background: Discover Pass Program Generally. During the 2011 regular session, the Legislature passed 2SSB 5622 which generally requires an annual Discover Pass or day-use permit for motor vehicle access to recreation lands managed by the State Parks & Recreation Commission, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW).

Discover Pass Exemptions. A Discover Pass or day-use permit is not required in certain circumstances. Examples include the following:

- parking at designated short-term parking areas;
- entry onto state lands consistent with a written authorization such as a lease or contract;
- accessing DFW lands with a Vehicle Access Pass, which is issued along with certain hunting and fishing licenses; and
- operating on an ungated road managed by DNR or DFW.

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.

Partial Discover Pass Exemption Through the State Parks Pass Program. The statutorily created State Parks pass program provides a series of partial Discover Pass exemptions. That is, those who qualify for a senior citizen limited income pass, a disability pass, a disabled veteran lifetime pass, or a foster home pass receive free or discounted camping and free access to state parks. More specifically any Washington resident who is a veteran and has a service-connected disability of at least 30 percent can receive a disabled veteran lifetime pass, entitling the veteran to free use of any campsite and free admission to any state park.

Complementary Volunteer Discover Pass. A volunteer who performs 24 hours of service on agency-sanctioned volunteer projects in a year is entitled to a complimentary Discover Pass. The agencies provide a volunteer with vouchers identifying the number of volunteer hours. After reaching 24 volunteer hours, the volunteer can redeem the vouchers for a Discover Pass.

Summary of Bill: Upon request, a state resident who is a veteran with a 100 percent service-connected disability is entitled to a complimentary Discover Pass each year.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: OTHER: The one concern is the fiscal impact the current bill will have. Funding of state parks has been decreasing over the last few biennia, which should be kept in mind when considering policy decisions on what passes are to be given away.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Alia Griffing, WA Federation of State Employees; Katie Manning, State Parks and Recreation Commission.