

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5305

As of February 22, 2017

Title: An act relating to supporting access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.

Brief Description: Supporting access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.

Sponsors: Senators O'Ban, Zeiger, Bailey and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 1/31/17, 2/16/17 [DP-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/21/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides a Discover Pass exemption for a person who has been issued a disabled veteran lifetime pass from the State Parks & Recreation Commission.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Chair; Hawkins, Vice Chair; Van De Wege, Ranking Member; Fortunato and McCoy.

Staff: Curt Gavigan (786-7437)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Jed Herman (786-7346)

Background: Discover Pass Program in General. During the 2011 regular session, the Legislature established the requirement for an annual Discover Pass or day-use permit for motor vehicle access to recreation lands managed by the State Parks & Recreation Commission (State Parks), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish & Wildlife (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.

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.

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. 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.

Summary of Bill: A Discover Pass is not required where a disabled veteran lifetime pass issued by State Parks is displayed, as long as the person to whom the pass is issued is a driver or passenger in the motor vehicle.

A penalty for failure to display a Discover Pass must be waived if a person provides the court with evidence that the person has obtained or is eligible for a disabled veteran lifetime pass.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Natural Resources & Parks): PRO: This bill supports veterans.

OTHER: Supporting veterans is a worthy cause, but there are a number of proposals in the Legislature this year that could affect Discover Pass funding.

Persons Testifying (Natural Resources & Parks): PRO: Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

OTHER: Todd Tatum, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Natural Resources & Parks): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): OTHER: The three agencies who are partnered on the Discover Pass are currently working on a Legislature-directed study with the Ruckelshaus Center. Part of the study is directly about the topic of free passes, which

includes the topic of this bill. A final report is due to the Legislature in December 2017. We encourage that the Senate wait to move a bill like this until the report has been submitted and considered.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): OTHER: Todd Tatum, Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.