S-4769.4

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**SENATE BILL 6093**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Schoesler, Becker, Braun, O'Ban, Holy, Zeiger, Fortunato, Ericksen, Warnick, Muzzall, Wilson, L., Sheldon, Rivers, Short, Hasegawa, Kuderer, and Wagoner

AN ACT Relating to free public access to state parks and lands; amending RCW 46.01.140, 46.01.370, 46.16A.090, 77.15.750, 79A.05.070, 79A.80.010, 79A.80.050, 79A.80.060, 79A.80.070, 79A.80.080, 79A.80.090, 79A.80.100, and 79A.80.110; creating a new section; and repealing RCW 79A.80.020.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) The legislature finds that as the public enjoys open space and the natural beauty and recreational opportunities of this state, state lands and parks are a public good that should be available to all people, regardless of financial means.

(2) The legislature also finds that while the economic circumstances resulting from the great recession brought about user-based, pay-to-play policies, such as the discover pass, for access to state-owned lands, this policy has resulted in decreased attendance and usage of our state parks and lands. A decline by an average of seven million visits per year as compared to the visitation rates of the two years prior to the enactment of the discover pass.

(3) For most of Washington's history, public access to state parks and lands were free to all.  It was a policy that served our state well.  It is the intent of the legislature to return to that policy and repeal the requirement of having a discover pass to visit any state-owned land.  The lost revenues that would have otherwise come from discover pass sales are intended to be replaced with state general fund appropriation.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.01.140 and 2013 c 169 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) **County auditor/agent duties.** A county auditor or other agent appointed by the director must:

(a) Enter into a standard contract provided by the director;

(b) Provide all services authorized by the director for vehicle certificates of title and vehicle registration applications and issuance under the direction and supervision of the director including, but not limited to:

(i) Processing reports of sale;

(ii) Processing transitional ownership transactions;

(iii) Processing mail‑in vehicle registration renewals until directed otherwise by legislative authority;

(iv) Issuing registrations and temporary ORV use permits for off‑road vehicles as required under chapter 46.09 RCW;

(v) Issuing registrations for snowmobiles as required under chapter 46.10 RCW; and

(vi) Collecting fees and taxes as required((~~;~~

~~(c) If authorized by the director, offer for sale discover passes as provided in chapter 79A.80 RCW~~)).

(2) **County auditor/agent assistants and subagents.** A county auditor or other agent appointed by the director may, with approval of the director:

(a) Appoint assistants as special deputies to accept applications for vehicle certificates of title and to issue vehicle registrations; and

(b) Recommend and request that the director appoint subagencies within the county to accept applications for vehicle certificates of title and vehicle registration application issuance.

(3) **Appointing subagents.** A county auditor or other agent appointed by the director who requests a subagency must, with approval of the director:

(a) Use an open competitive process including, but not limited to, a written business proposal and oral interview to determine the qualifications of all interested applicants; and

(b) Submit all proposals to the director with a recommendation for appointment of one or more subagents who have applied through the open competitive process. If a qualified successor who is an existing subagent's sibling, spouse, or child, or a subagency employee has applied, the county auditor must provide the name of the qualified successor and the name of one other applicant who is qualified and was chosen through the open competitive process.

(4) **Subagent duties.** A subagent appointed by the director must:

(a) Enter into a standard contract with the county auditor or agent provided by the director; and

(b) Provide all services authorized by the director for vehicle certificates of title and vehicle registration applications and issuance under the direction and supervision of the county auditor or agent and the director including, but not limited to:

(i) Processing reports of sale;

(ii) Processing transitional ownership transactions;

(iii) Mailing out vehicle registrations and replacement plates to internet payment option customers until directed otherwise by legislative authority;

(iv) Issuing registrations and temporary ORV use permits for off‑road vehicles as required under chapter 46.09 RCW;

(v) Issuing registrations for snowmobiles as required under chapter 46.10 RCW; and

(vi) Collecting fees and taxes as required((~~; and~~

~~(c) If authorized by the director, offer for sale discover passes as provided in chapter 79A.80 RCW~~)).

(5) **Subagent successorship.** A subagent appointed by the director who no longer wants his or her appointment may recommend a successor who is the subagent's sibling, spouse, or child, or a subagency employee. The recommended successor must participate in the open competitive process used to select an applicant. In making successor recommendations and appointment determinations, the following provisions apply:

(a) If a subagency is held by a partnership or corporate entity, the nomination must be submitted on behalf of, and agreed to by, all partners or corporate officers;

(b) A subagent may not receive any direct or indirect compensation or remuneration from any party or entity in recognition of a successor nomination. A subagent may not receive any financial benefit from the transfer or termination of an appointment;

(c) The appointment of a successor is intended to assist in the efficient transfer of appointments to minimize public inconvenience. The appointment of a successor does not create a proprietary or property interest in the appointment;

(d) A subagent appointee who is planning to retire within twelve months may recommend a successor without resigning his or her appointment by submitting a letter of intent to retire with a successor recommendation to the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director. The county auditor or other agent appointed by the director shall, within sixty days, respond in writing to the subagent appointee indicating if the recommended successor would be considered in the open competitive process. If there are negative factors or deficiencies pertaining to the subagency operation or the recommended successor, the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director must state these factors in writing to the subagent appointee. The subagent appointee may withdraw the letter of intent to retire any time prior to the start of the open competitive process by writing to the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director and filing a copy with the director;

(e) A subagent appointee may name a recommended successor at any time during his or her appointment by notifying the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director in writing and filing a copy with the director. The purpose of this recommendation is for the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director to know the wishes of the subagent appointee in the event of the death or incapacitation of a sole subagent appointee or last remaining subagent appointee that could lead to the inability of the subagent to continue to fulfill the obligations of the appointment; and

(f) If the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director does not select the recommended successor for appointment as a result of the open competitive process, the county auditor or other agent appointed by the director must contact the subagent appointee by letter and explain the decision. The subagent appointee must be provided an opportunity to respond in writing. Any response by the subagent appointee must be included in the open competitive process materials submitted to the department.

(6) **Standard contracts.** The standard contracts provided by the director in this section may include provisions that the director deems necessary to ensure that readily accessible and acceptable service is provided to the citizens of the state, including the full collection of fees and taxes. The standard contracts must include provisions that:

(a) Describe responsibilities and liabilities of each party related to service expectations and levels;

(b) Describe the equipment to be supplied by the department and equipment maintenance;

(c) Require specific types of insurance or bonds, or both, to protect the state against any loss of collected revenue or loss of equipment;

(d) Specify the amount of training that will be provided by each of the parties;

(e) Describe allowable costs that may be charged for vehicle registration activities as described in subsection (7) of this section; and

(f) Describe causes and procedures for termination of the contract, which may include mediation and binding arbitration.

(7) **County auditor/agent cost reimbursement.** A county auditor or other agent appointed by the director who does not cover expenses for services provided by the standard contract may submit to the department a request for cost‑coverage moneys. The request must be submitted on a form developed by the department. The department must develop procedures to standardize and identify allowable costs and to verify whether a request is reasonable. Payment must be made on those requests found to be allowable from the licensing services account.

(8) **County auditor/agent revenue disbursement.** County revenues that exceed the cost of providing services described in the standard contract, calculated in accordance with the procedures in subsection (7) of this section, must be expended as determined by the county legislative authority during the process established by law for adoption of county budgets.

(9) **Appointment authority.** The director has final appointment authority for county auditors or other agents or subagents.

(10) **Rules.** The director may adopt rules to implement this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.01.370 and 2012 c 261 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:

The department may, in coordination with the state parks and recreation commission, offer for sale and distribute ((~~discover passes and~~)) day-use permits, as provided in chapter 79A.80 RCW, at the department's drivers' licenses offices. Any amounts collected by the department through the sales of ((~~discover passes and~~)) day-use permits must be deposited in the recreation access pass account created in RCW 79A.80.090.

**Sec.**  RCW 46.16A.090 and 2012 c 261 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director must provide an opportunity for a vehicle owner to make a voluntary donation as provided in this section when applying for an initial or renewal vehicle registration.

(2)(a) A vehicle owner who registers a vehicle under this chapter may donate one dollar or more to the organ and tissue donation awareness account to promote the donation of organs and tissues under the uniform anatomical gift act as described in chapter 68.64 RCW. The donation of one or more dollars is voluntary and may be refused by the vehicle owner.

(b) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director must:

(i) Ask a vehicle owner applying for a vehicle registration if the owner would like to donate one dollar or more;

(ii) Inform a vehicle owner of the option for organ and tissue donations as required under RCW 46.20.113; and

(iii) Make information booklets or other informational material available regarding the importance of organ and tissue donations to vehicle owners.

(c) All reasonable costs associated with the creation of the donation program created under this section must be paid proportionally or by another agreement by a participating Washington state organ procurement organization established for organ and tissue donation awareness purposes by the Washington state organ procurement organizations. For the purposes of this section, "reasonable costs" and "Washington state organ procurement organization" have the same meaning as in RCW 68.64.010.

(3) The department must collect from a vehicle owner who pays a vehicle license fee under RCW 46.17.350(1) (a), (d) through (l), (n), (o), or (q) or who registers a vehicle under RCW 46.16A.455 with a declared gross weight of twelve thousand pounds or less a voluntary donation of five dollars. The donation may not be collected from any vehicle owner actively opting not to participate in the donation program. The department must ensure that the opt-out donation under this section is clear, visible, and prominently displayed in both paper and online vehicle registration renewals. Notification of intent to not participate in the donation program must be provided annually at the time of vehicle registration renewal. The donation must be deposited in the state parks renewal and stewardship account established in RCW 79A.05.215 to be used for the operation and maintenance of state parks.

((~~(4) A vehicle owner who registers a vehicle under this chapter may purchase a discover pass for the price amount established in RCW 79A.80.020. Purchase of a discover pass is voluntary by the vehicle owner. The discover pass fee must be deposited in the recreation access pass account created in RCW 79A.80.090. The department, county auditor, or other agent or subagent appointed by the director is not responsible for delivering a purchased discover pass to a motor vehicle owner. The agencies, as defined in RCW 79A.80.010, must deliver the purchased discover pass to a motor vehicle owner.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 77.15.750 and 2011 c 320 s 20 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A person is guilty of unlawful use of a department permit if the person:

(a) Violates any terms or conditions of the permit issued by the department or the director; or

(b) Violates any rule of the commission or the director applicable to the requirement for, issuance of, or use of the permit.

(2)(a) Permits covered under subsection (1) of this section include, but are not limited to, master hunter permits, crab pot removal permits and shellfish pot removal permits under RCW 77.70.500, depredation permits, landowner hunting permits, commercial carp license permits, permits to possess or dispense beer or malt liquor pursuant to RCW 66.28.210, and permits to hold, sponsor, or attend an event requiring a banquet permit from the state liquor ((~~control~~)) and cannabis board.

(b) Permits excluded from subsection (1) of this section include ((~~the discover pass created in RCW 79A.80.020,~~)) the vehicle access pass created in RCW 79A.80.040, the day-use permit created in RCW 79A.80.030, commercial use or activity permits, noncommercial use or activity permits, parking permits, experimental fishery permits, trial commercial fishery permits, and scientific collection permits.

(3) Unlawful use of a department permit is a misdemeanor.

(4) A person is guilty of unlawful use of an experimental fishery permit or a trial commercial fishery permit if the person:

(a) Violates any terms or conditions of the permit issued by the department or the director; or

(b) Violates any rule of the commission or the director applicable to the issuance or use of the permit.

(5) Unlawful use of an experimental fishery permit or a trial commercial fishery permit is a gross misdemeanor.

(6) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Experimental fishery permit" means a permit issued by the director for either:

(i) An "emerging commercial fishery," defined as a fishery for a newly classified species for which the department has determined that there is a need to limit participation; or

(ii) An "expanding commercial fishery," defined as a fishery for a previously classified species in a new area, by a new method, or at a new effort level, for which the department has determined that there is a need to limit participation.

(b) "Trial commercial fishery permit" means a permit issued by the department for trial harvest of a newly classified species or harvest of a previously classified species in a new area or by a new means.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.05.070 and 2012 c 261 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

The commission may:

(1) Make rules and regulations for the proper administration of its duties;

(2) Accept any grants of funds made with or without a matching requirement by the United States, or any agency thereof, for purposes in keeping with the purposes of this chapter; accept gifts, bequests, devises and endowments for purposes in keeping with such purposes; enter into cooperative agreements with and provide for private nonprofit groups to use state park property and facilities to raise money to contribute gifts, grants, and support to the commission for the purposes of this chapter. The commission may assist the nonprofit group in a cooperative effort by providing necessary agency personnel and services, if available. However, none of the moneys raised may inure to the benefit of the nonprofit group, except in furtherance of its purposes to benefit the commission as provided in this chapter. The agency and the private nonprofit group must agree on the nature of any project to be supported by such gift or grant prior to the use of any agency property or facilities for raising money. Any such gifts may be in the form of recreational facilities developed or built in part or in whole for public use on agency property, provided that the facility is consistent with the purposes of the agency;

(3) Require certification by the commission of all parks and recreation workers employed in state aided or state controlled programs;

(4) Act jointly, when advisable, with the United States, any other state agencies, institutions, departments, boards, or commissions in order to carry out the objectives and responsibilities of this chapter;

(5) Grant franchises and easements for any legitimate purpose on parks or parkways, for such terms and subject to such conditions and considerations as the commission shall specify;

(6) Charge fees for services, utilities, and use of facilities as the commission shall deem proper. The commission may utilize unstaffed collection stations to collect any fees or distribute any permits necessary for access to state parks, including ((~~discover passes and~~)) day-use permits as ((~~those terms are~~)) that term is defined in RCW 79A.80.010;

(7) Enter into agreements whereby individuals or companies may rent undeveloped parks or parkway land for grazing, agricultural, or mineral development purposes upon such terms and conditions as the commission shall deem proper, for a term not to exceed forty years;

(8) Determine the qualifications of and employ a director of parks and recreation who must receive a salary as fixed by the governor in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.03.040 and determine the qualifications and salary of and employ such other persons as may be needed to carry out the provisions hereof; and

(9) Utilize such other powers as in the judgment of a majority of its members are deemed necessary to effectuate the purposes of this chapter. However, the commission does not have power to supervise directly any local park or recreation district, and no funds shall be made available for such purpose.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.010 and 2019 c 175 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Agency" or "agencies" means the department of fish and wildlife, the department of natural resources, and the parks and recreation commission.

(2) "Annual natural investment permit" means the annual permit issued by the parks and recreation commission for the purpose of launching boats from the designated state parks boat launch sites.

(3) "Camper registration" means proof of payment of a camping fee on recreational lands managed by the parks and recreation commission.

(4) "Day-use permit" means the permit created in RCW 79A.80.030.

(5) ((~~"Discover pass" means the annual pass created in RCW 79A.80.020.~~

~~(6)~~)) "Motor vehicle" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 46.04.320 and which are required to be registered under chapter 46.16A RCW. "Motor vehicle" does not include those motor vehicles exempt from registration under RCW 46.16A.080, wheeled all-terrain vehicles registered for use under RCW 46.09.442, and state and publicly owned motor vehicles as provided in RCW 46.16A.170.

((~~(7)~~)) (6) "Recreation site or lands" means a state park, state lands and state forestlands as those terms are defined in RCW 79.02.010, natural resources conservation areas as that term is defined in RCW 79.71.030, natural area preserves as that term is defined in RCW 79.70.020, and fish and wildlife conservation sites including water access areas, boat ramps, wildlife areas, parking areas, roads, and trailheads.

((~~(8)~~)) (7) "Sno‑park permit" means the permit issued by the parks and recreation commission for providing access to winter recreational facilities for the period of November 1st through March 31st.

((~~(9)~~)) (8) "Vehicle access pass" means the pass created in RCW 79A.80.040.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.050 and 2012 c 261 s 6 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A ((~~discover pass or a~~)) day-use permit ((~~are~~)) is not required within a state park for persons who have a valid camper registration, or annual natural investment permit, issued by the state parks and recreation commission.

(2) The state parks and recreation commission must provide up to twelve days a year where entry to state parks is free. At least three of those days must be on weekends. When practicable, the free access days should be timed to correspond with any similar free access days planned by the national park service for national parks located in the general region of high volume state parks.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.060 and 2019 c 175 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The ((~~discover pass or the~~)) day‑use permit ((~~are~~)) is not required, for persons who have a valid sno‑park permit issued by the state parks and recreation commission, at designated sno‑parks between November 1st through March 31st.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.070 and 2011 c 320 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

Each agency, where applicable, must designate short-term parking not to exceed thirty minutes where the ((~~discover pass or~~)) day-use permit ((~~are~~)) is not required at recreation sites or lands.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.080 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 15 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) A ((~~discover pass,~~)) vehicle access pass((~~,~~)) or day-use permit must be visibly displayed in the front windshield, or otherwise in a prominent location for motor vehicles without a windshield, of any motor vehicle:

(a) Operating on any recreation site or lands; or

(b) Parking at any recreation site or lands.

(2) The ((~~discover pass, the~~)) vehicle access pass((~~,~~)) or the day-use permit is not required:

(a) On private lands, state-owned aquatic lands other than water access areas, or at agency offices, hatcheries, or other facilities where public business is conducted;

(b) For persons who use, possess, or enter lands owned or managed by the agencies for nonrecreational purposes consistent with a written authorization from the agency, including but not limited to leases, contracts, and easements;

(c) On department of fish and wildlife lands only, for persons possessing a current vehicle access pass pursuant to RCW 79A.80.040; or

(d) When operating on a road managed by the department of natural resources or the department of fish and wildlife, including a forest or land management road, that is not blocked by a gate.

(3)(a) An agency may waive the requirements of this section for any person who has secured the ability to access specific recreational land through the provision of monetary consideration to the agency or for any person attending an event or function that required the provision of monetary compensation to the agency.

(b) Special events and group activities are core recreational activities and major public service opportunities within state parks. When waiving the requirements of this section for special events, the state parks and recreation commission must consider the direct and indirect costs and benefits to the state, local market rental rates, the public service functions of the event sponsor, and other public interest factors when setting appropriate fees for each event or activity.

(4) Failure to comply with subsection (1) of this section is a natural resource infraction under chapter 7.84 RCW. An agency is authorized to issue a notice of infraction to any person who fails to comply with subsection (1)(a) of this section or to any motor vehicle that fails to comply with subsection (1)(b) of this section.

(5) The penalty for failure to comply with the requirements of this section is ninety-nine dollars. ((~~This penalty must be reduced to fifty-nine dollars if an individual provides proof of purchase of a discover pass to the court within fifteen days after the issuance of the notice of violation.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.090 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 1 s 988 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The recreation access pass account is created in the state treasury. All moneys received from the sale of ((~~discover passes and~~)) day-use permits must be deposited into the account.

(2) Each fiscal biennium, the first seventy-one million dollars in revenue must be distributed to the agencies in the following manner:

(a) Eight percent to the department of fish and wildlife and deposited into the state wildlife account created in RCW 77.12.170;

(b) Eight percent to the department of natural resources and deposited into the parkland trust revolving fund created in RCW 43.30.385;

(c) Eighty-four percent to the state parks and recreation commission and deposited into the state parks renewal and stewardship account created in RCW 79A.05.215;

(d) During the 2015-2017 fiscal biennium, expenditures from the recreation access pass account may be used for Skamania county court costs. During the 2015-2017 and 2017-2019 fiscal biennia, expenditures from the recreation access pass account may be used for the state parks and recreation commission, in partnership with the departments of fish and wildlife and natural resources, to develop options and recommendations to improve recreational access fee systems.

(3) Each fiscal biennium, revenues in excess of seventy-one million dollars must be distributed equally among the agencies to the accounts identified in subsection (2) of this section.

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.100 and 2012 c 261 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~(1) Discover passes and~~)) Day-use permits may be made available for purchase:

((~~(a)~~)) (1) Through vendors under contract with one or more of the agencies. The agencies may provide vendors with ((~~discover passes and~~)) day-use permits at the sales price established under RCW ((~~79A.80.020 and~~)) 79A.80.030 to sell at retail;

((~~(b)~~)) (2) Directly from the state parks and recreation commission, both through that agency's parks reservation system, directly from agency employees or volunteers at staffed state parks, or as otherwise provided in RCW 79A.05.070;

((~~(c)~~)) (3) From the department of licensing as provided in RCW 46.16A.090 and 46.01.370;

((~~(d)~~)) (4) From other outlets authorized by law to sell state licenses, permits, or passes; and

((~~(e)~~)) (5) Consistent with RCW 77.32.050, through the department of fish and wildlife's automated licensing system.

((~~(2) The agencies must maintain a policy to address conditions related to return, replacements, and for providing the full year of recreational lands access that the discover pass provides to individuals who are required by the department of licensing to change license plate numbers during the effective dates of a discover pass tied to the affected vehicle.~~

~~(3) For discover passes and day-use permits purchased through the department of licensing, county auditors, or other agents or subagents appointed by the director of the department of licensing, the selling entity is not responsible for delivering the purchased discover pass to the purchaser. The responsibility for delivering the discover pass belongs to the agencies.~~))

**Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.110 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 15 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) By mutual agreement, the agencies may sell discounted ((~~discover passes at a rate below that established under RCW 79A.80.020 or discounted~~)) day-use permits at a rate below that established under RCW 79A.80.030 for purposes of bulk sales to retailers, agency license and permit product bundling, and partnership opportunities to expand accessibility and visibility of the ((~~discover pass and~~)) recreational opportunities on agency-managed lands.

(2) In exercising this authority, the agencies must prioritize opportunities for discounted sales that result in a net revenue gain.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  RCW 79A.80.020 (Discover pass) and 2017 c 121 s 1, 2013 2nd sp.s. c 15 s 1, 2012 c 261 s 2, & 2011 c 320 s 3 are each repealed.

**--- END ---**