

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2819

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 26, 1998

Title: An act relating to vehicle use on department of fish and wildlife lands.

Brief Description: Requiring display of a vehicle use permit while using department of fish and wildlife improved access facilities.

Sponsors: House Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Buck, Regala and Chandler; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources & Parks: 2/26/98 [DPA, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Oke, Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Hargrove, Jacobsen, Prentice, Snyder, Spanel and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Stevens.

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: The Department of Fish and Wildlife owns and manages property in the state, and the department also owns more than 600 improved access facilities. The access facilities are areas specifically created for vehicle parking; more than half of these have a boat launch or a boat ramp associated with the parking area. Under current law, a person 16 years of age or older who wishes to use Department of Fish and Wildlife lands or access facilities and who does not already have a hunting, fishing, trapping, or free license from the department must purchase a conservation license. A spouse, children under 18 years of age, and youth groups may use department lands and access facilities without possessing their own licenses if they are accompanied by a license holder. A violation of this licensing requirement is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of \$500 or up to 90 days in county jail or both.

A conservation license costs \$10 per year. The department estimates that, for the period 1987 to 1996, an average of 902 licenses have been sold annually. License revenues are deposited in the wildlife fund.

Summary of Amended Bill: A conservation license is no longer required for users of Department of Fish and Wildlife lands. Instead of a conservation license, all users of department designated improved access facilities with a motor vehicle must display a current annual fish and wildlife lands vehicle use permit on the motor vehicle. An improved access facility is a clearly identified area specifically created for motor vehicle parking and includes

any boat ramp or boat launch associated with the parking area; the parking area at the Gorge Concert Center is expressly excluded. The permit is issued in the form of a decal, which must be displayed on the motor vehicle before entering and using the improved access facility. If required, failure to display the vehicle use permit is an infraction rather than a misdemeanor, and the penalty for the infraction is \$66.

Youth groups may use department improved access facilities without possessing a permit when accompanied by a permit holder.

One decal representing a vehicle use permit is issued at no charge with annual state hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses. The annual fee for a vehicle use permit purchased separately is \$10. A person to whom the department has issued a decal or who has purchased a decal separately may also purchase a decal for each additional vehicle the person owns at a cost of \$5 per decal upon showing of proof to the department that the person owns the additional vehicle or vehicles. Revenues from permit sales continue to be deposited in the wildlife fund but must be used solely for the stewardship and maintenance of the improved access facilities.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The program is discretionary for the department so all sites would not need a decal. A voluntary contribution of \$20 gives anyone a decal for the program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 20, 1998.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 1999.

Testimony For: The Department of Fish and Wildlife water access areas do not have adequate maintenance and a dedicated funding source is needed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Ed Manary, Department of Fish and Wildlife; John Woodring, Northwest Marine Trade Association; Ron Schultz, Audubon Society.