
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4003

State of Washington 60th Legislature 2007 Regular Session

By House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Representatives Chase, Morris and Hunt)

READ FIRST TIME 02/26/07.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
6 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
7 represent and petition as follows:

8 WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, P.L. 108-
9 477, allows the federal land management agencies such as the United
10 States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife
11 Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation to charge
12 access fees for recreational use of federally managed public lands by
13 the general public; and

14 WHEREAS, H.R. 3283 was never approved by the United States House of
15 Representatives, was never introduced, never had hearings, and was
16 never approved by the United States Senate, but was instead attached to
17 omnibus spending bill H.R. 4818 as an appropriations rider; and

18 WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act is
19 substantive legislation including criminal penalties that fundamentally
20 changes the way America's public lands are funded and managed; and

1 WHEREAS, Federal policies regarding management of public lands have
2 a profound impact on the well-being of the citizens of Washington State
3 and changes to those policies should be conducted in an open public
4 forum; and

5 WHEREAS, Recreational fees constitute double taxation and bear no
6 relationship to the actual costs of recreation such as hiking,
7 picnicking, observing wildlife, equestrian use, or scenic driving on
8 state and county roads and public rights of way; and

9 WHEREAS, The concept of paying fees to use public lands is contrary
10 to the idea that public lands belong to the American people and are
11 places where everyone is granted access and is welcome -- a concept
12 that has been and should remain in place; and

13 WHEREAS, The fees imposed by the Federal Lands Recreation
14 Enhancement Act are a regressive tax that places undue burden on the
15 people living in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by large areas
16 of federal land, as well as discriminating against lower-income and
17 working Americans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their
18 enjoyment of publicly owned land; and

19 WHEREAS, These access fees to public lands are highly controversial
20 and are opposed by hundred of organizations, county governments,
21 several state legislatures, and by millions of Americans; and

22 WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act also
23 establishes an interagency pass to be used to cover entrance fees and
24 recreational amenity fees for federal lands and waters, disregarding
25 the substantially different way in which national parks and other
26 federal public lands are managed and funded; and

27 WHEREAS, The limited means of expressing opposition to and the lack
28 of public debate in the implementation of the fee program raises the
29 concern that some citizens are deterred from visiting and enjoying
30 public lands in Washington State and throughout the United States; and

31 WHEREAS, Tourism is an important industry to Washington State, and
32 recreational fees will have a negative impact on the state and local
33 economies;

34 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
35 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which was enacted December 8,
36 2004, be abolished, and that no recreational fees be imposed on federal
37 lands within the State of Washington under the Federal Lands Recreation
38 Enhancement Act.

1 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
2 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United
3 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the
4 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of
5 Washington.

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