

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1953

As of March 22, 2019

Title: An act relating to reducing the amount of permits required for recreation at a sno-park.

Brief Description: Reducing the amount of permits required for recreation at a sno-park.

Sponsors: House Committee on Housing, Community Development & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Corry, Fitzgibbon, Hoff, Harris, Griffey, McCaslin, Springer, Steele and Graham).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/07/19, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks: 3/21/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes that a Discover Pass is not required for a vehicle displaying a daily sno-park permit.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, WATER, NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Discover Pass Program. In 2011, the Legislature established the Discover Pass Program. The Discover Pass establishes a user fee for motor vehicle access to recreational areas managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. A Discover Pass costs \$30 per year, while a day-use permit costs \$10 per day. The annual Discover Pass is transferrable between two vehicles. The penalty for failure to display the required recreation access pass or permit is \$99. The penalty is reduced to \$59 if an individual provides proof of a Discover Pass purchase to the court within 15 days of being notified of a violation.

Sno-Parks. Sno-parks are parking areas cleared of snow near groomed and backcountry trails managed by the Winter Recreation Program. State Parks operates more than 120 sno-parks. Sno-parks provide access to land available for snowmobiling, tubing, cross-country skiing, and general snow play. During the winter months of November through March, a daily or seasonal sno-park permit must be displayed on motor vehicles parked at a sno-park. A

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seasonal sno-park permit costs \$40, and a daily sno-park permit costs \$20. Persons with a seasonal sno-park permit do not need to display a Discover Pass. At some locations, persons with a daily sno-park permit must also display a day-use or annual Discover Pass. The penalty for a failure to comply with a sno-park permit requirement is \$73.

Summary of Bill: During the winter months of November through March, a vehicle displaying a daily sno-park permit at a designated sno-park is not required to display a Discover 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: PRO: This bill is a result of constituents raising some frustrations they were having while trying to use our beautiful state parks for some winter recreation. It is important to make access as seamless and transparent and easy as possible for people across Washington. This bill fixes the primary complaint from the public about the winter recreation program. Sno-park fees go to support the operation of sno-parks and discover pass fees support access to state parks, Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources recreational lands and it is important to maintain these revenue streams for their intended purposes.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Chris Corry, Prime Sponsor; Owen Rowe, Governmental Affairs Director, State Parks; Pamela McConkey, Winter Recreation Program Director, State Parks.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.