

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2275

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to raising funds for state parks.

Brief Description: Regarding funding of state parks.

Sponsors: Representatives Kessler, B. Sullivan, Kenney, Chase and Hunt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 2/22/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows motor vehicle owners to make a voluntary donation of \$5 at the time of initial or renewal registration. The donation would be available to registrations due or to become due on or after January 1, 2008.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Blake, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eickmeyer, Grant, Hailey, Kagi, Lantz, McCoy, Newhouse, Orcutt, Strow and VanDeWege.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

The State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account

All receipts from user fees, concessions, leases, and other state park-based activities are deposited into the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account (Account). Expenditures from the Account are used for operating state parks, developing and renovating park facilities, undertaking deferred maintenance, enhancing park stewardship, and other state park purposes. Expenditures from the Account may be made only after appropriation by the Legislature.

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.

License Fees

A \$30 license tab fee is required per year for motor vehicles, regardless of year, value, make, or model. The motor vehicles required to pay the \$30 include cars, sport utility vehicles, motorcycles, and motor homes.

Trucks, motor trucks, truck tractors, road tractors, tractors, buses, auto stages, and for-hire vehicles with a seating capacity of more than six also pay an annual license fee based on the weight of the vehicle. Vehicles with a declared gross weight of 10,000 pounds or less pay an annual license fee between \$40 and \$62, depending on their weight.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Licensing (DOL) will provide an opportunity to donate an additional \$5 at a vehicle's initial registration or renewal. The fee will be deposited into the State Parks Renewal and Stewardship Account to be used for the operation and maintenance of state parks.

The DOL will begin collecting the donations on registrations due on or after January 1, 2008.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

This bill makes the \$5 a donation to the state parks, instead of a mandatory fee, and eliminates the certification opt-out. This bill also will make donations possible on registrations due on or after January 1, 2008, instead of August 1, 2007. Trucks under the gross weight of 10,000 pounds are also included in this bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Approximately 7 percent of the population would donate the \$5 at the time of registration renewal, based on the estimate of people who visit the parks. The State Parks and Recreation Commission does not have a stable funding source, and tends to be the last agency to receive funds. The parks need a stable, sustainable funding source since the parking fees were abolished last year.

(Neutral) State parks would receive approximately \$2 million from donations.

(With concerns) The process for renewals will be affected by the \$5 donation. The proper allocation of fees collected will require administrative time and additional costs.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Kessler, prime sponsor; and Amber Lewis and Don Hall, Washington Federation of State Employees.

(Neutral) Fred Romero, State Parks and Recreation Commission.

(With concerns) Thad Duvall, Washington State Association of County Auditors.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.