
Environment Committee

HB 1271

Brief Description: Creating a more equitable penalty for failure to comply with discover pass requirements by setting the penalty at a level equal to the sales price for a discover pass.

Sponsors: Representatives Harmsworth, Muri, Bergquist, Stokesbary, MacEwen, Van Werven, Condotta, Doglio and Buys.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces the penalty for failing to display a Discover Pass, vehicle access pass, or day use permit from \$99 to equal the \$30 sales price of the Discover Pass.
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Hearing Date: 1/23/17

Staff: Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

Background:

The Discover Pass is an annual pass that allows a motor vehicle to access state recreation lands managed by the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The cost of a Discover Pass is \$30. The cost of a day-use permit, which serves the same function as the annual pass but is only valid for one calendar day, is \$10. Every four years, the Office of Financial Management must review the cost of the Discover Pass and day-use permit, and recommend an adjustment to the cost to account for inflation.

A vehicle access pass is a pass issued during the purchase of a qualifying hunting or fishing license by the DFW. A vehicle access pass may be displayed instead of a Discover Pass or day-use permit on DFW recreation lands.

A number of exemptions exist to Discover Pass, vehicle access pass, or day-use permit display requirements, including for vehicles camping in a state park or driving on roads operated by the DNR or the DFW.

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.

The penalty for failing to display a valid pass when parking at or operating on state recreation lands is \$99. This penalty must be reduced to \$59 if the individual provides proof of purchase of a Discover Pass to the court within 15 days of the violation. The failure to display a valid pass when parking at or operating on state recreation lands is a natural resource infraction brought in the district court district in which the infraction occurred.

Penalties for failure to display a valid pass, along with revenue from Discover Passes and day use permit sales, are deposited in the recreation access pass account. Money in that account is then distributed to the three agencies as follows: 84% to State Parks (state parks renewal and stewardship account), 8% to DFW (state wildlife account), and 8% to DNR (park land trust revolving fund). If total revenue from the two passes exceeds \$71 million in a given biennium, any revenue over that amount is distributed equally among the three agencies.

Summary of Bill:

The penalty for failing to display a Discover Pass, day-use permit, or vehicle access pass on state recreation lands is set at an amount equal to the sales price of the Discover Pass, which is currently \$30. The penalty must be waived if the cited individual provides proof of purchase of a Discover Pass to the court within 15 days of the violation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

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