

HB1357

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department

Senate Transportation Committee

Fort Totten Room, 9:30 am

Friday, March 12, 2021

Ryan Gardner, West Region Manager

Good morning Chairman Clemens, members of the committee: my name is Ryan Gardner, West Region Manager, with North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. I am testifying on behalf of the Department and providing neutral testimony for HB 1357 relating to permits for entry to state parks to provide a continuing appropriation.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (Department) vehicle entry permit, as defined in century code, is currently required to access a North Dakota State Park. Users can purchase a daily permit for \$7 or an annual permit for \$35. Discounted permits are available for North Dakota residents aged 65 and older and North Dakota veterans with service-related disabilities up to 50% for \$28. A free lifetime permit is available to North Dakota veterans with 50% or greater service-related disabilities. Additionally, all North Dakota volunteer first responders with red license plates have free access to all state parks.

The requirement that a second or subsequent annual permit issued to a permitholder, which may be used by members of the permitholder's household for \$20, may result in a loss of revenue for the Department due to a second permit being purchased at a lower price. The fiscal note provided shows a potential decrease in revenues by \$42,800 based on reduced revenue from sales of multiple passes. Revenues that are received from permits are invested back into infrastructure, maintenance and providing amenities as customer preferences continue to evolve. The fiscal note also shows an increase in the cost required for programming and testing of our point of sale system to support this bill. This is required to ensure that our current point of sale system can perform the duties outlined in this bill.

The Department is always committed to providing the best customer service and experiences and remains open to exploring all options. Should this legislation pass, the Department would like the opportunity to evaluate any potential fiscal impacts in case future price adjustments may be needed. The revenues from permit sales go directly back into maintenance of infrastructure and recreational amenities.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks; I would be pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have. Thank you for your time and consideration.