

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS
FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

LS 6295
BILL NUMBER: HB 1204

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 29, 2026
BILL AMENDED: Jan 29, 2026

SUBJECT: Natural Resource Entrance Fees.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Hall
FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: 2nd Reading - 1st House

FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL
X DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: The bill allows counties that meet certain criteria to adopt an ordinance to impose a surcharge of not more than \$1 in addition to the fees charged by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for entry into certain state parks and recreation areas. It provides that the surcharge may not be imposed on an annual state park pass holder. It requires the DNR to collect and to report and pay the surcharge to each county treasurer. It provides that the surcharge collected is to be used for certain purposes.

Effective Date: July 1, 2026.

Explanation of State Expenditures: The bill could minimally increase workload for the DNR to impose a surcharge on entry fees at the specified DNR properties if they receive notice from a county fiscal body that an ordinance has been adopted. The DNR has 60 days after receiving the notice to begin collecting the fee, and must remit the surcharge collected to the county treasurer on a monthly basis. Any workload impact will depend upon local decisions.

Explanation of State Revenues: If a surcharge causes reduced visits to DNR properties, entrance revenue to the DNR's Division of State Parks and Recreation may decrease. Conversely, if a surcharge causes increased purchases of annual passes (the surcharge may not be imposed on annual passholders), revenue for annual passes could increase.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: (Revised) The bill could minimally increase workload for a county fiscal body that adopts an ordinance to impose the surcharge. County fiscal bodies would need to notify the DNR if an ordinance is adopted. County treasurers would need to approve forms to be used by the DNR for reporting the surcharge collected, and would be required to use the surcharge revenue only for public safety or for infrastructure, including water quality improvements, if impacted by tourism or for the benefit of tourism.

Explanation of Local Revenues: Revenue increases will depend on whether a county fiscal body adopts an ordinance to impose a surcharge for entry into a state park or state recreation area (SRA). The amount of revenue would depend on the number of paying vehicles that enter a state park or SRA in that county. If a

state park or SRA is located in more than one county, the surcharge is to be prorated for each of those counties that have passed an ordinance.

Most entry fees are paid per vehicle (not per person). The DNR tracks admission revenue at each DNR property (this data does not include passes/permits purchased online). Based on this data for FY 2025, there are an average of about 29,200 paying vehicles at individual DNR properties, not including annual passholders. Some counties have more than one state park or SRA.

Indiana Dunes State Park had 131,755 paying vehicles in FY 2025. Brown County State Park, Turkey Run State Park, and Monroe Lake each had between 50,000 and 100,000 paying vehicles; thirteen properties each had between 20,000 and 50,000 each; and fifteen properties each had between 7,000 and 20,000.

State Agencies Affected: Department of Natural Resources.

Local Agencies Affected: County fiscal bodies; public safety systems; water authorities.

Information Sources: Department of Natural Resources.

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