

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

LS 6780

BILL NUMBER: HB 1265

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 28, 2025

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Natural Resource Entrance Fees.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Yocum

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FIRST SPONSOR:

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: The bill allows counties to adopt an ordinance to impose a surcharge of not more than \$2 in addition to the fees charged by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for entry into state parks and state recreation areas. It requires the DNR to collect the surcharge and to report and pay the surcharge to each county treasurer. It provides that the revenue collected is to be used for purposes related to first responders and infrastructure improvements. It provides that the surcharge may not be imposed on a person who holds an annual pass.

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 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: 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 purposes related to first responders and infrastructure improvements, including water quality.

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) and the amount set for the surcharge (up to \$2). The amount of revenue would also depend on the number of paying vehicles

that enter a state park or SRA in that county and how many of those visitors are veterans (resident), active military, age 65 and older, or annual passholders (the bill provides that the surcharge does not apply to these individuals). 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; 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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