

SB 101: STATE PARK FEES AND SALE OF MERCHANDISE

BRIEFING PAPER

FOR THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE • APRIL 8, 2015

SB 101 is necessary to allow the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to sell state park-themed merchandise to retailers, ensuring a fair and reasonable return to help support state park operations, and thereby reducing our reliance on general funds

The bill would accomplish the following primary objectives:

- 1) The bill would add a new subsection to AS 41.21.026 to grant the Department of Natural Resources the authority to sell to retailers state park-themed merchandise for informational, educational or promotional purposes to support park operations.
- 2) The new subsection would allow the department to establish prices for park themed merchandise so as to ensure a fair and reasonable return.
- 3) The bill would remove language in AS 41.21.026(a) requiring all fees to be collected in a park unit, making clear that the department has the authority to collect fees at locations outside of a park unit.

Why the bill is needed:

The Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation generates about \$3 million annually in revenue from park fees. A wholesale merchandise sales program will increase and diversify revenue opportunities potentially reducing the amount of unrestricted general funds necessary to support park operations.

The bill will allow the state to create, purchase and sell authentic Alaska State Park merchandise to retailers, thus providing opportunities for private businesses while generating revenue. Currently the only source for Alaska State Park merchandise is on-line retailers operating outside the state. The state receives no revenue from these sales.

Alaskans who buy authentic Alaska State Parks merchandise would be confident that their purchase benefits the state parks they care about.