

SB

13



# Alaska State Legislature

Senator Mike Szymanski

While in Session:  
P.O. Box V  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99811  
(907) 465-4978/4979

## MEMORANDUM

Interim  
11920 Johns Rd.  
Anchorage, AK 99515  
(907) 349-3373

January 27, 1987

1024 W. 6th  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 276-6739

TO: Senator Mitch Abood, Chairman  
Senate State Affairs Committee

FROM: Senator Mike Szymanski MS/MS

SUBJECT: SB 13, Park Fees Legislation



I would like to request that the Senate State Affairs Committee schedule a hearing for SB 13, relating to the levy and collection of fees for the use of state park facilities, at the earliest possible date.

This legislation which has been before the Legislature twice in the last four years, is vital for the healthy development and enhancement of our state parks program and the tourism industry. At a time of declining revenues and budget cutbacks, this legislation would provide for additional revenues for the Division of Parks and partially offset the need for general fund monies. It would certainly appear to be a vital program to lessen our dependence on oil revenues, enhance the development of the tourism industry, and be a step in stabilizing our economy.

As a point of information, Alaska is the ONLY state which does not presently collect any state park fees. It is anticipated by the Department of Natural Resources that approximately 15% of the Division of Parks budget could be offset by a system of fees (the national average is 25% offset but the percentage is less in Alaska because our season is considerably shorter).

I have contacted both local and state Chambers of Commerce and tourism industry groups as well as individuals and there is widespread support for such legislation.

I am attaching back-up on SB 13 for your information. Please contact me or my staff person, Paula Terrel, if you need anything further.

Thank you for your consideration.

RECEIVED  
JAN 30 1986



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
RESEARCH AGENCY

P.O. Box Y, State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-3100  
Mail Stop 3100  
(907) 465-3991

December 11, 1986

MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Mike Szymanski

ATTN: Paula Terrel

FROM: Mary Jennings *mg*  
Legislative Analyst

RE: Park User Fees in Other States  
Research Request 87.054

You requested information concerning user fees for Washington, Oregon, and California state parks, specifically, fee structures, nonresident fees, and the disposition of the fees. In addition, you requested a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of state park user fees.

According to the National Association of State Park Directors, user fees are charged in all state parks except those in Alaska. Attachment A, prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, presents a table of day and overnight user fees in 43 states.

Washington

**Fee Structure.** In Washington State, the fee for overnight camping at a developed campsite (a site with picnic table, fire pit, and parking area) is \$6.00. A site with sewer, water, and electricity hook-ups is \$8.50. The fee for a primitive campsite (a cleared area primarily used for tent camping) is \$4.50 when a vehicle is parked at the site and \$3.00 with no vehicle.

State parks with boat moorage facilities charge a fee between May first and Labor Day for overnight use of the moorage. The fee for boats under 26 feet is \$3.50 and the fee for boats over 26 feet is \$5.50. Season permits are available: \$24.00 for boats under 26 feet and \$40.00 for boats over 26 feet.

Group overnight camping facilities are available, with the fee depending upon the number of people in the group. Picnic areas for day use may be reserved 30 days in advance by groups of twenty or more for a \$10.00 fee. The picnic areas may be used on a space available basis for no charge.

**Nonresident Use.** Persons from states that charge an additional fee to nonresidents are charged a comparable fee for using Washington parks. This fee is collected based upon a residency question on camping registration forms. Park officials enforce the nonresident fee by periodically checking vehicle license plates at the campsites.

**Special User Fees.** The state offers a \$15.00 annual off-season pass for residents over 62 years of age. The pass can be used for 30 overnight visits between the months of September and April. A limited income provision allows persons with a combined household income of less than \$16,000 to pay half the regular fee for using state parks. Permits allowing half-price fees are also available to persons with a minimum 30 percent disability. Veterans who are over 62 and have a minimum 30 percent disability may obtain a permit that allows camping without paying user fees.

**Disposition of Fees.** User fees are deposited into the state's general fund. The fees represent approximately 16 percent of the annual operating budget of the state's Parks and Recreation Commission.

## Oregon

**Fee Structure.** The user fee set by the Oregon Division of Parks and Recreation of the Department of Transportation for an overnight camping site with electric, water, and sewer hook-ups is \$8.00. A site with electric and water is \$7.00, a site with just a water hook-up is \$6.00 and a site with no hookups is \$5.00. Overnight camping fees are reduced \$1.00 between October first and May first. In parks with boat moorage facilities, a moorage fee of \$2.00 per night is charged.

Many campgrounds utilize an extra vehicle fee. A campsite occupied by fewer than four adults with more than two vehicles parked at the site is charged \$2.00 per additional vehicle and a site with more than five adults and more than two vehicles is charged \$5.00 per additional vehicle. Some campgrounds provide overflow lots with a parking charge of \$2.00 per vehicle. On holidays and weekends during the summer, a day use entrance fee of \$1.00 per vehicle is charged in popular parks. This fee does not apply to tour buses.

**Nonresident Use.** Campers with vehicles that have out-of-state license plates are charged an additional \$2.00 fee for campsite use. According to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Division, this fee is charged on the basis of vehicle license plates, regardless of whether or not the campers live within the state.

**Disposition of Fees.** All fees, except the dollar day use fee, are dedicated to the State Park Maintenance and Operation Fund. The day use fee is kept by the generating park for maintenance uses. User fees account for approximately 25 percent of the total operating budget for state parks. Other funds come from the state's general fund and recreational vehicle registration fees.

## California

**Fee Structure.** The California Department of Parks and Recreation charges a \$6.00 fee for overnight camping at developed campsites (sites with picnic tables, fire pits, and common hot and cold shower facilities), a \$12.00 fee for recreational vehicle sites (sites with water, electric, and sewer hook-ups), and a \$3.00 fee for primitive sites (sites with a water source and toilet facilities). For overnight camping at developed campsites on the South Coast beaches, the fee is \$8.00

The day use fee is \$2.00 per vehicle and \$3.00 per vehicle for parks on the South Coast beaches. The charge for vehicles with between 10 and 24 passengers is \$10.00 and the charge for vehicles with over 24 passengers is \$20.00.

**Special Fees.** Senior citizens are offered a discount of \$2.00 for overnight camping and a \$1.00 discount on day use fees. The "Golden Bear" pass allows senior citizens on a fixed income to use the parks for a \$5.00 annual fee. For a fee of \$3.50, a lifetime pass is available to veterans who have a minimum 70 percent disability. Nonresidents pay the same user fees as residents.

**Disposition of Fees.** All user fees are deposited into the state's general fund. User fees represent approximately 35 percent of the parks' operating budget. The fee schedules for the state parks in California are currently being revised and, according to an official, the fees are likely to be increased next year.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

User fees in state parks could favorably be viewed as a means of raising revenues for the maintenance and improvement of state parks for the benefit of the public. An official with the California Department of Parks and Recreation stated that user fees, which account for approximately \$6 million in annual revenues, enable the state to maintain a high standard of quality in their parks. He felt that without user fees, many parks could not be kept open and the quality of parks left open would decrease.

In opposition to the practice, user fees may be viewed as causing increased administrative costs. For example, personnel would be needed in the parks in order to enforce collection of fees and further administration would be required to account for the fees. On the other hand, one could argue that present park personnel would be capable of handling these duties and that revenues generated from the user fees would be in excess of any additional administrative costs.

Representative Szymanski

December

Page 4

User fees could also be perceived to discriminate against the economically disadvantaged. Many states have tried to remedy this situation by offering discounted user fees for low-income families. An official with the Washington Parks and Recreation Commission stated their discount permit programs have been successful in allowing low-income, disabled and elderly persons access to state parks.

#### User Fees In Alaska's State Parks

Revenues. According to John Rubini of the Alaska Attorney General's Office, user fees charged in state parks would have to be deposited into the State's General Fund. Although the State Constitution prohibits the dedication of user fees to the parks budget, Mr. Rubini stated that the legislature has routinely appropriated program receipts to the program that generated the revenue. He stated that the legislature uses this type of appropriation as an incentive for efficient operation of a particular program.

Nonresident Users. The Attorney General's Office stated that the State could probably differentiate fees between resident and nonresident users. The office stated that this could most likely be achieved under guidelines similar to those allowing resident and nonresident fee differentiation for hunting and fishing licenses.

I hope you find this information useful. I have attached a user fee schedule from California and have requested fee schedules from Washington and Oregon and I will forward them to you when I receive them. I have also attached a report prepared by Legislative Research Agency of the Oregon State Legislature that details funding of state parks in the U.S. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

MJ

Attachments

PARK SURVEY

STATE	TENT DAY USE	RV CAMPING	DATE OF LAST INCREASE	
Alabama	1.00	7.00	20.00	1984
Alaska				
Arizona	2.00	5.00	7.00	
Arkansas	7.00	5.00	7.00	1983
California	2.00	6.00	14.00	1985
Colorado	3.00	7.00	10.00	1986
Connecticut	4.00	7.00	7.00	1983
Delaware	2.00	10.00	14.00	1986
Florida				
Georgia	0.00	3.00	7.00	1984
Hawaii				
Illinois	4.00	6.00		1984
Indiana	0.00	4.50	7.00	1986
Iowa	2.00	5.25	5.25	1985
Kansas	2.00	2.00	3.00	
Kentucky	0.00	3.50	3.50	1984
Louisiana				
Maine	1.00	3.00		1986
Maryland	0.00			
Massachusetts	0.00			
Michigan	1.00			
Minnesota	3.00	4.00		
Mississippi	1.00	5.50	11.00	1986
Missouri	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Montana	1.00	5.00	5.00	1984
Nebraska	2.00	4.00	3.00	1984
Nevada	0.00	5.00		
New Hampshire	1.00	9.00		1984
New Jersey		7.00		1986
New Mexico	1.00	5.00		1986
New York	3.50			
North Carolina	0.00	5.00		
North Dakota	1.50	5.50		1984
Ohio	0.00	3.00	10.00	1985
Oklahoma	0.00	3.00	9.00	1982
Oregon	1.00	4.00	3.00	1982
Pennsylvania	0.00	3.00		1985
Rhode Island	2.00			1982
South Carolina	0.00	12.00		1986
South Dakota				
Tennessee				
Texas	2.00	3.00	7.00	1985
Utah	2.00	4.00	9.00	1986
Vermont	2.00	7.50		1984
Virginia	3.00	7.00	11.00	1983
Washington	0.00	3.00	3.00	
West Virginia	3.00	3.50		
Wyoming	0.00	2.00		

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

**SCHEDULE OF STATE PARK SYSTEM USE FEES**

(Effective January 1, 1986)

**CAMPING**

**FAMILY CAMPSITES**

Hookup for Trailers, Campers, etc.	\$12.00 per campsite per night
Developed Campsites (incl. environmental sites and en route camping except where developed. Campsite fee is \$8.00)	\$6.00 per campsite per night
Developed Campsites (excl. environmental sites and incl. en route camping) at Carpinteria, Doheny, El Capitan, Gaviota, Leo Carrillo, McGrath, New Brighton, Point Mugu, Refugio, San Clemente, San Elijo, San Onofre, Seacliff, South Carlsbad, and Sunset State Beaches only.	\$8.00 per campsite per night
Primitive Campsites	\$3.00 per campsite per night
Reservation Fee (Family Camps)	(Pending awarding contract)

**GROUP CAMPING**

	Varies (\$20.00 to \$100.00 per night) - Based on capacity and facilities for group camps on the Reservation System. Group camps not on the Reservation System may charge a minimum fee plus \$1.00 per adult or \$.50 per youth over the minimum on an experimental basis. (see Schedule of Group Camp Fees, DPR 5398)
Reservation Fee (Group Camps)	
Camps on Reservation System	(Pending awarding contract)
Camps NOT on Reservation System	\$3.50 per group camp for each period reserved (collected by park when reservation is made)

**OTHER**

Horse Camps	\$6.00 per campsite per night, plus \$1.00 per horse (\$7.00 for Los Caballos Campground at Cuyamaca Rancho SP)
Boat Camps	\$3.00 per campsite per night
Overflow Areas	Normally the same fee as charged for campsites in the unit.
Additional Motor Vehicle	\$3.00 per night for each additional motor vehicle if used in park
Charge Per Dog	\$1.00 per night (no charge for guide dogs)
Trail Camps (Hikers and Bicyclists)	\$1.00 per person per night

*Collection Envelopes are provided for deposit of fees in secure receptacles at some camping units*

**DAY USE**

Persons entering by private vehicle (all units with coastal access - Santa Barbara County south)	\$7.00 per vehicle - Annual Day Use Permits may be used by frequent visitors
Persons entering by private vehicle (all other units)	\$2.00 per vehicle
Persons entering by bus	Normal Day Use Fee per mini-bus or van (9 passenger or less) \$10.00 per bus (10 to 24 passengers) \$20.00 per bus (25 or more passengers)
Group Day Use	Site capacity x \$.50 + 10% reservation fee except where parking space is limited, the fee is: Normal Day Use Fee per vehicle plus the reservation fee (reservations through park only)
Horse Entry	\$2.00 per vehicle, plus \$1.00 per horse; or trail entry, \$1.00 per horse
Charge per dog	\$.50 per dog (no charge for guide dogs)
Parking Fees at 12 dirt parking lots at San Mateo Coast and southern beaches	Variable

*NOTE - Free admission for school groups - K through 12 - with reservation made through park*

Boat including air Day Use facilities

Boat Use Only	\$2.00 per day per registered boat	
Angel Island Boat Mooring	\$2.00 per day; \$4.00 if boat size prevents mooring two boats per slip	
Brannan Island SRA Boat Berthing (overnight)	\$6.00 per boat per night	
Holding Tank Pumpout	\$3.00 per each use	
Lake Oroville Floating Campsites	\$35.00 per night	
Cabin Rentals Richardson Grove SP, Malakoff Diggins SP, and Mt. Tamalpais SP	\$15.00 per night	
	6 - 17	18 and Over
Mitchell Caverns NP Tour	\$1.00 per person	\$2.00 per person
	17 and Under	18 and Over
State Parks Swimming Pools Bothe-Napa Valley Grover Hot Springs	\$ .75 per person \$1.00 per person	\$1.50 per person \$2.00 per person

### HISTORIC

	Age 6 - 17	18 and Over
*Museums	\$ .25	\$ .50
California State Railroad Museum	\$1.00	\$3.00
State Indian Museum	\$ .50	\$1.00
**Historic Units	\$ .25	\$ .50
**Sutter's Fort SHP and Governor's Mansion	\$ .50	\$1.00
Monterey Monuments	\$ .50	\$1.00
Monterey Monuments Tour Package	\$2.00	\$3.50

\* If a museum is in a unit with controlled access, where the public must pay either a day use or camping fee, there is no charge for admission to the museum upon presentation of the camping or day use ticket

\*\* Includes use of device to provide recorded tour information at some units

NOTE: Free admission for school groups - K through 12 - with reservation made through park

Hearst San Simeon SHM	Age 6 - 12	13 and Over
TOUR 1 (lower floor)	\$4.00	\$8.00
TOUR 2 (upper floor)	\$4.00	\$8.00
TOUR 3 (recreation wing)	\$4.00	\$8.00
TOUR 4 (garden & behind the scenes)	\$4.00	\$8.00

### ANNUAL/SPECIAL PASSES

<b>Disabled Veteran Pass</b>	<b>\$3.50 one-time payment</b>	<b>Golden Bear Pass</b>	<b>\$5.00 Per Calendar Year</b>
For honorably discharged war veterans with 70% or more service-connected disability or a service-connected disability rated at 100% for reasons of unemployability.		For persons receiving Aid to the Aged, Blind, or Disabled; persons age 62 or older within the income limitations; or persons receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children.	
Permits use of all State Park System facilities, including boat launching.		Permits use of day use facilities in all State Park System units except Hearst San Simeon SHM, Sutter's Fort SHP, or California State Railroad Museum.	
<b>Annual Day Use Pass</b>	<b>\$40.00 Per Calendar Year</b>	<b>Annual Boat/Day Use Pass</b>	<b>\$65.00 Per Calendar Year</b>
Valid at all parks with day use facilities.		Valid at all parks with day use facilities and State-operated boat launching facilities.	

NOTE: The Annual Day Use Pass will not be honored at OHV units. The OHV Day Use Pass will be valid only at OHV units.

## ANNUAL/SPECIAL PASSES – Continued

---

### Second Vehicle Pass \$10.00 per Calendar Year

May be purchased in conjunction with the Annual Day Use or Annual Boat/Day Use Pass with proof of registration.

### Boat Pass

\$25.00 Per Calendar Year

May be purchased by Golden Bear Pass holders entitling them to the use of the same facilities as Annual Boat/Day Use Pass holders. May also be purchased for an additional boat on the same trailer.

### Senior Citizen Discount

For persons 62 years of age or older. Proof of age based on California Drivers License or other identification card.

Permits year-round \$1.00 discount for vehicle day use and \$2.00 discount for camping at all State Park System units. Not available when using the reservation system or for Hearst San Simeon State Historic Monument.

---

NOTE: The Annual Day Use Pass will not be honored at OHV units. The OHV Day Use Pass will be valid only at OHV units.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

S-420 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310-1316

(503) 378-8871

86:20

---

TO: Senate Transportation Committee  
FROM: Melanie Zermer, Research Analyst  
SUBJECT: Other States' Funding of State Parks  
DATE: March 21, 1986

You requested Legislative Research to determine how other states fund their parks, especially what innovative methods are used or have been considered. This memorandum discusses nine types of funding mechanisms other than user fees and legislative appropriation of general funds. The mechanisms discussed usually relate to park operations and maintenance. Capital improvements and land acquisition, in most cases, are paid from bonds issued for that purpose.

Legislative Research conducted a 50-state mail survey and to date, we received responses from 41 states. Of those states which responded, twelve fund their parks solely from general funds, federal funds, and user fees.<sup>1</sup> Currently Oregon funds its parks through general funds (20%), park user fees (25%), vehicle registration fees (33%), State Highway Fund (3%), miscellaneous funds (5%), and federal funds (14%).<sup>2</sup> Oregon's 1985-87 biennial budget for state parks is \$37 million or \$18.5 million each fiscal year. Although Oregon ranks eleventh in amount of money appropriated for state parks, it ranks second in percentage of total budget allocated to parks.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>User fees are those revenues collected from patrons of the park facilities. Examples include park entrance fees, camping ground fees, cabin or lodge rental, concessions operations, beach or pool use fees, golf course fees, etc.

<sup>2</sup>The Highway Division reimburses the Parks Division from the State Highway Fund because the Parks Division maintains wayside parks which also serve as rest areas. Miscellaneous funds include real property, rental for agricultural production, sale of timber and land, and fees from Deschutes River boat passes.

<sup>3</sup>National Association of State Park Directors, Annual Information Exchange 1986 (Denver, Colorado: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1985).

Other states have found other ways to supplement their park budgets. These methods have brought in as much as \$6 million in one state to as little as \$75,000 in another. The following paragraphs briefly describe each funding mechanism, what states implement or have considered them, and when possible, the amount of revenue generated in fiscal year 1985.

**Cigarette and Alcohol Taxes.** Nebraska has imposed a one cent tax on each pack of cigarettes purchased which has raised \$1.3 million for Nebraska's parks. Alabama also has a cigarette tax which has raised \$430,000. Michigan and North Dakota have considered this tax to supplement park funds. Kansas imposed a ten percent liquor-by-the-drink sales tax of which one third goes to local park and recreation projects. Other alcohol taxes which Washington has considered include a beer tax on brewers for the privilege of selling in the state, sales tax on liters of wine and hard liquor, and a ten percent tax on retail sales-by-the-drink licenses.

**Land Leasing.** Like Oregon, other states lease land for private endeavors to help fund state parks. Washington leases coastal areas for aquatic purposes, Vermont leases land for ski areas, and Iowa leases land for agricultural purposes. In general, not much revenue is generated. Oregon raised \$90,000 in fiscal year 1985, and Iowa raised \$170,000.

**Business Taxes and Royalties.** These revenues are payments from private industries. The states that impose these taxes do so because it can be argued that industry takes something of value from the land and they should return something of value for that privilege. Some of these taxes can be large revenue enhancers. Wisconsin's forestry mill tax raised \$1.96 million or 23 percent of its fiscal year 1985 park budget. Montana's coal tax raised \$602,400 or 14 percent of its park budget. Iowa receives sand and gravel royalties; Texas and New Mexico levy a severance tax on the oil and gas industries. Determining the business tax or royalty varies from a simple one percent of gross product value to complex formulas.

**Fuel Taxes.** At least eight states collect fuel taxes to supplement state park budgets. But in Iowa, Nevada, South Dakota, Washington, and Montana, only fuel taxes collected from watercraft use can be used for the parks. Washington has collected over \$1 million annually from this source. Montana also receives fuel taxes from snowmobile users. Park divisions in Idaho and New Mexico collect a portion of the total fuel taxes collected by the state. But

---

\*Mike Reed, Outdoor Recreational Funding, Washington Senate Parks and Ecology Committee, Washington Legislature, October 1982.

New Mexico can only use this revenue source for maintaining boating facilities.

**Sale and Excise Taxes.** Both Missouri and Washington reserve a small portion of the state's sales tax for their state park budgets. Michigan and North Dakota have considered taxing the purchase of certain recreational equipment such as skis, cameras, hiking and camping equipment, etc. In a Washington study it was observed that there may be difficulties in collecting taxes and enforcing the program unless a new division in the Department of Revenue is created.

**Document Taxes.** Maryland has a real estate tax program to supplement its park budget. A certain percentage of the value of property is taxed when it is sold or otherwise transferred to another party. The seller is obligated to pay the tax. Maryland receives \$6 million annually from this source. Florida receives revenue for parks from several document transaction taxes such as 13 percent of the state real estate tax, bill of sale on stock, promissory notes, and stock certificates. Florida collects \$5 million annually from these sources to supplement its park budget.

**License and Registration Fees.** Ohio collects \$1.6 million annually from boat licenses. Idaho collects \$617,500 from snowmobile, motor bike, off road vehicle, and boat registration fees. South Dakota collects boat registration fees and Montana collects snowmobile registration fees to enhance their state park budgets.

**Gambling.** Colorado designates 3.5 percent of its lottery proceeds to state parks. South Carolina designates its bingo proceeds for parks.

**Miscellaneous.** New Mexico has encouraged the development of nonprofit "Friends of the Park" groups which raise funds and provide other volunteer services for the parks. Maryland systematically collects donations through a check-off box on the state income tax form and has a Citizen Donation Committee which allocates the money. Vermont sells state park T-shirts. Ohio sells park salvage equipment. Michigan has considered securing uncollected bottle deposit money from soda and alcoholic beverage distributors. No information was available to determine the amount of revenue each source collected.

APR 23 1985

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

### DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

225A CORDOVA STREET  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501  
PHONE: (907) 276-2653

MAILING ADDRESS:  
POUCH 7001  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99510

April 19, 1985

Re: Legislation for Campground Fees

The Honorable Arliss Sturgulewski  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Senate  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Sturgulewski:

Here's information on our proposed campground fee legislation (CS HB267) which recently passed the House 38-0.

#### The History of Fees in Public Campgrounds

The federal government began collecting fees in national parks over 50 years ago. Of the country's 50 state park systems, only Alaska has no campsite fee program. Here in Alaska, the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Municipal campgrounds all charge fees for camping. And, of course, private campgrounds charge.

In 1976, there was a \$10.00 annual entrance fee established to use the Alaska State Park System. This program was terminated two years later by legislation dealing with motor vehicles [AS 28.10.411(e)] which stated that any vehicle with an Alaskan license plate need not pay State Park fees.

#### Why Should We Charge Fees Again?

In a few words -- declining revenues and increasing demands. In 1982, there were 2.2 million visitors to our state park system; in 1983, 4.3 million; and last year, about 5 million! We project ending the current fiscal year with 5.9 million visits. Information from other agencies charging fees shows that people desire well-developed, well-maintained camping facilities and they are willing to pay for them. Managers have also found a decrease in vandalism and a number of positive management spin-offs which occur when campsite fees are charged. Although government-operated campgrounds are seldom fully self-supporting, nationwide approximately 10% are. At a minimum, we can reduce the government subsidy of this popular, but nonetheless expensive, program. By the way, across the nation, state parks now capture about 25% of their operation costs with fees.

The Honorable Arliss Sturgulewski  
April 19, 1985  
Page 2 -

#### How Do People Feel About Campground Fees?

Surprisingly, more than half of facility users will pay without hesitation. The Forest Service here in Alaska reports 77% compliance at more remote facilities and 92% compliance where a volunteer campground host is on the premises. My field staff tells me that many visitors, especially those from Outside, are surprised that no fees are charged in Alaska State Park campgrounds. Owners of private campgrounds are very much in favor of the charge. They are tired of the free government competition. Last year, the Alaska Visitors' Association supported a previous attempt at legislation authorizing campsite fees. Editorials of support of this measure have recently appeared in the Anchorage Times, Anchorage Daily News and the Juneau Empire. The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner reprinted the Times editorial on their editorial page.

#### How Much Would Be Charged and At Which Facilities?

Fees would be approximately \$6.00 per overnight use of a campsite for residents, and approximately \$8.00 for non-residents. At first, only those campgrounds with substantial improvements would be included, with a graduated fee being charged for facilities with running water and modern restrooms. A "season pass" should also be made available at between \$50.00 and \$75.00 per year. Many of the less-developed, more primitive campgrounds should and will remain free. Only half of the state's campgrounds (2,000 campsites in the system now) would have fees.

#### How Would The Fees Be Collected?

The "iron ranger" self-registration fee station has been very successful for other agencies through the years, both outside and in Alaska. This is a simple, slotted iron container located near the park entrance into which fees are deposited by visitors who will be overnighing at the campground. The fee station is self-operating and does not require staff. The station issues a camping permit which is placed on each vehicle dashboard. Park staff can then readily determine who has paid, while on routine patrol. At larger facilities, a volunteer campground host will welcome each visitor, assisting with nearby facility locations and assuring general compliance with the campsite fee program. By the way, we recruited over 200 volunteers last year and hope to expand volunteer assistance to 350 people this year.

#### How Much Revenue Would Be Generated and How Much Would the Program Cost?

If legislation is passed, a pilot collection program at selected sites could be started in mid-July 1985. By June of 1986 the program could be in full swing. The cost for FY'86 would be \$56.0 and in future years drop to \$26.4. These funds would be used to purchase fee collection stations, office safes and additional vehicle miles for collection purposes. The original fiscal note included \$21.4 personal services money to fund a part-time accounting

The Honorable Arliss Sturgulewski  
April 19, 1985  
Page 3 -

clerk in our Department office and several extra person months for our field collection staff. We still feel these funds are important to the program's smooth operation. Personal services funds were dropped in House Finance. In full operation, we should be able to raise half a million dollars a year.

Along with this proposed camping fee, I hope to work through existing regulations and statutes to generate revenue from programs such as public use cabins, guides and outfitters permits, concessions and tours of historical sites. I feel that with tourism being one of the largest job and revenue producing industries in Alaska, State Parks should be an active member of that industry. And with a declining revenue curve, it is encumbant on me to formulate economic strategies which make money and save money while serving the public.

I respectfully ask the support of Senate Resources in passing the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil C. Johannsen", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Neil C. Johannsen  
Director

cc: Members/Senate Resource Committee  
Honorable Esther Wunnicke