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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4003

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State of Washington                      60th Legislature                      2007 Regular Session

By Representatives Chase, Morris and Hunt

Read first time 01/22/2007. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1            TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2            AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3            REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4            UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

5            We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
6            the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
7            represent and petition as follows:

8            WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, P.L. 108-  
9            477, allows the federal land management agencies such as the United  
10           States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife  
11           Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation to charge  
12           access fees for recreational use of federally managed public lands by  
13           the general public; and

14           WHEREAS, H.R. 3283 was never approved by the United States House of  
15           Representatives, was never introduced, never had hearings, and was  
16           never approved by the United States Senate, but was instead attached to  
17           omnibus spending bill H.R. 4818 as an appropriations rider; and

18           WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act is  
19           substantive legislation including criminal penalties that fundamentally  
20           changes the way America's public lands are funded and managed; and

1       WHEREAS, Federal policies regarding management of public lands have  
2 a profound impact on the well-being of the citizens of Washington State  
3 and changes to those policies should be conducted in an open public  
4 forum; and

5       WHEREAS, Recreational fees constitute double taxation and bear no  
6 relationship to the actual costs of recreation such as hiking,  
7 picnicking, observing wildlife, or scenic driving on state and county  
8 roads and public rights of way; and

9       WHEREAS, The concept of paying fees to use public lands is contrary  
10 to the idea that public lands belong to the American people and are  
11 places where everyone is granted access and is welcome -- a concept  
12 that has been and should remain in place; and

13       WHEREAS, The fees imposed by the Federal Lands Recreation  
14 Enhancement Act are a regressive tax that places undue burden on the  
15 people living in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by large areas  
16 of federal land, as well as discriminating against lower-income and  
17 working Americans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their  
18 enjoyment of publicly owned land; and

19       WHEREAS, These access fees to public lands are highly controversial  
20 and are opposed by hundred of organizations, county governments,  
21 several state legislatures, and by millions of Americans; and

22       WHEREAS, The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act also  
23 establishes an interagency pass to be used to cover entrance fees and  
24 recreational amenity fees for federal lands and waters, disregarding  
25 the substantially different way in which national parks and other  
26 federal public lands are managed and funded; and

27       WHEREAS, The limited means of expressing opposition to and the lack  
28 of public debate in the implementation of the fee program raises the  
29 concern that some citizens are deterred from visiting and enjoying  
30 public lands in Washington State and throughout the United States; and

31       WHEREAS, Tourism is an important industry to Washington State, and  
32 recreational fees will have a negative impact on the state and local  
33 economies;

34       NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the  
35 Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which was enacted December 8,  
36 2004, be abolished, and that no recreational fees be imposed on federal  
37 lands within the State of Washington under the Federal Lands Recreation  
38 Enhancement Act.

1           BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
2 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
3 States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the  
4 House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
5 Washington.

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