

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5855

As of February 17, 1995

Title: An act relating to transfer of state forest lands back to counties.

Brief Description: Providing for transfer of state forest lands back to counties for public purpose.

Sponsors: Senator Hargrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources: 2/24/95.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Staff: Vic Moon (786-7469)

Background: In the early 1900s and up through the 1930s, counties took possession of a number of forest land parcels as a result of tax delinquencies. In many cases, the timber had already been harvested from these lands prior to the forfeiture of the property to the counties.

During this same time, the Legislature grew concerned about reforestation in the state. In 1927 and again in 1935, the Legislature determined that forest lands forfeited to the counties should be deeded to the state and become part of state forest lands. Some 540,000 acres of land were thus transferred to state management. These are called forest board transfer lands.

Forest board transfer lands are held and administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The state may not sell these lands; however, the lands may be leased, and timber and other products may be sold. Up to 25 percent of the gross income from leases and product sales goes into the forest development account. The remainder goes back to the county and is distributed in the same manner as general tax revenues are distributed.

Summary of Bill: If the county commissioners from a county with forest board transfer lands determine that these forest lands are needed by the county, the county commissioners may file an application with the Board of Natural Resources for transfer of the forest lands.

The board must direct the department to reconvey the forest lands to the requesting county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 1995.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.