

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

ESSB 6149

Title: An act relating to the sale of specific lands for the purposes of resolving trespass on state forest lands.

Brief Description: Allowing the disposition of state forest lands without public auction.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, T. Sheldon and Rasmussen; by request of Commissioner of Public Lands..

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: February 18, 2000.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Josh Weiss, Counsel (786-7129)

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources manages approximately 620,000 acres of forest board transfer trust and forest board purchase lands. Transfer trust lands were logged forest lands that appeared on county tax foreclosure inventories. They were transferred to the state and are now managed for the benefit of the counties they are located in. Purchase lands were logged forest lands purchased by the state to maintain a long-term forest resource base. After management expenses, the income from purchase lands is split between the counties they are located in, and the state general fund for the support of common schools. Together the forest board transfer trust lands and forest board purchase lands are referred to as the forest board- lands, which are distinguished from the federal trust lands the department also manages.

The department may dispose of trust lands in order to resolve trespass and property ownership disputes when it is in the best interest of the state, for fair market value, and after an appraisal.

There is no expedited method to dispose of forest board lands to resolve trespass and property ownership disputes. Forest board lands are specifically reserved from sale. These lands may be exchanged for other land, but only to consolidate the holdings of the state, county, municipality, or federal government. Forest board lands may be transferred back to the county in which they are located, but only for public park purposes.–

The department can acquire forest board lands, but may not pay more than \$2 per acre for lands that are devoid of forests, or \$6 per acre for lands that are forested. The department is required when purchasing such lands to designate the land with a distinctive name or number.

Summary of Bill:

The department may dispose of forest board lands in order to resolve trespass and property ownership disputes when it is in the best interest of the state for fair market value, and after an appraisal. Such disposal may only occur if the lands consist of no more than 10 contiguous acres or less, or are valued at \$25,000 or less. The proceeds from any disposal must be deposited into the park land trust revolving fund to fund the purchase of replacement land within the same county.

The department is allowed to acquire forest board lands for no more than fair market value, and provisions restricting the maximum price per acre are removed. Provisions requiring the department to designate forest board lands with a distinctive name or number are also removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Senate Passage: 2/12/00, 44-0.