



House Committee On Environment and Natural Resources  
Chair Dembrow and members of the committee

RE: SB 1512 transfer of forest lands

WE ARE A STRONG NO

This bill requires State Board of Forestry to identify acquired lands that have limited revenue-generation potential or have high-value recreational or conservation benefits and allows transfer to another state or federal agency, local government, or tribe with county approval.

The indication is the Washington's plan was used as a model. Washington operates a state Trust Land Transfer Program since 1989. Under the program, they review and prioritize a list of transfer properties with other state agencies and then submits an informational package to the Board of Natural Resources and Governor's office for submittal to the Legislature. The Legislature reviews the proposal, identifies a list of properties to transfer, and sets a funding level. Some properties are set for fee ownership transfer, others for a long-term lease. The DNR is responsible for carrying out the transfers within the biennium. Properties may not be transferred if they do not meet value expectations or for other reasons not known at the time of transfer approval.

SB 1512 requires the Board to obtain approval from the county where lands are located and from the governing authority of proposed receiving entity prior to transferring lands. All indication is that transfer of lands is permanent, where Washington's model indicates lands remain under state ownership and properties are set for fee ownership transfer or long-term lease.

SB 1512 does not provide all the steps that Washington takes to assure prudent land transfers. Instead, it authorizes the State Board of Forestry to identify lands that have limited revenue-generation potential or that provide high-value recreational or conservation benefits and authorizes the transfer of identified lands to another state or federal agency, local government, or tribe. Why would we consider selling forest land to another state or federal agency, which could be unconstitutional.

The measure requires the Board to obtain approval from the county where lands are located but does not require a vote of the people in the county. and approval from the governing authority of proposed receiving entity prior to transferring lands.

This bill has loopholes that need to be thought out to protect the sovereignty of the state.

Donna Bleiler  
FAST Legacy