

2023 Minnesota Lands Bill



Related Facts

The DNR manages 5.6 million acres of state land behalf of Minnesotans and continually strives to improve the state's land portfolio through strategic purchases, sales and exchanges.

Minnesota counties manage 2.8 million acres of tax-forfeited land.

Summary

Every year, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposes a lands bill that includes amendments to statutes that govern DNR's land transactions, changes to statutory boundaries of state parks, state recreation areas or state forests, and legislative authorization for select land sales. State parks and forests lands are established by legislation so the legislature must authorize changes to the borders. Land sales require legislative approval in some circumstances where lands will be sold by private sale, where certain lands border public waters, or where land is to be sold for less than market value. The DNR also works with counties and other agencies to review their lands-related legislative proposals, such as tax-forfeited land sales.

The 2023 Lands Bill proposes amendments to several statutes, provides for changes to certain state park and state forest boundaries and grants the DNR authority to sell certain riparian lands that would otherwise be withdrawn from sale. The bill authorizes the DNR to sell some of these lands by private sale and for less than market value. The DNR determined that the lands proposed for sale either no longer meet conservation or recreation needs, or that sales are needed to resolve land management issues. Some of the provisions in the 2023 Lands Bill are from the 2022 Lands Bill, which was heard in the 2022 legislative session.



Proposal

The 2023 Lands Bill proposes amendments to existing easement statutes that grant a party the right to cross DNR-administered state land, or grant the DNR the right cross another party's land. These amendments will allow the DNR to waive certain fees associated with the easements in circumstances where the proposed transaction will benefit the state. Other proposed amendments clarify that the DNR may issue 30-year leases for recreational facilities that are not associated with state trails, and may acquire conservation easements on lands with preexisting easements that are acceptable to the Commissioner.

The bill adds to the boundaries of Frontenac, Myre-Big Island and William O'Brien State Parks. It adds to the boundary of Riverlands State Forest and deletes lands that are now included in the Riverlands State Forest from the boundary of the Cloquet Valley State Forest.

The bill authorizes the DNR Commissioner to sell certain state lands in Becker, Cass, Fillmore, Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Hennepin, Sherburne, Pine County and Kandiyohi Counties. These sales require legislative authorization because either the lands will be sold by private sale rather than



by auction, or they border public waters, or both. The Hennepin and Sherburne County sales are properties that may be offered for less than market value.

The 2023 Lands Bill includes amendments allowing counties to increase lease terms and payments, issue conservation planning leases, and place conservation easements for ecosystem services on tax-forfeited lands. The bill further authorizes St. Louis County to deposit proceeds of tax-forfeited land sales into a trust fund from which principal and interest could be spent to acquire lands that are more suitable.

Finally, the bill authorizes Beltrami, Goodhue and St. Louis Counties to sell certain tax-forfeited lands by private sale.

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