

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2375

As Passed House:

February 12, 2002

Title: An act relating to trust land transfers.

Brief Description: Requiring a public hearing prior to transfer or disposal of trust land.

Sponsors: By Representatives Rockefeller, Buck, Doumit, Sump, Dunshee, Ericksen, Jackley, Kessler, Eickmeyer, Edwards, Woods, Haigh and McDermott.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/23/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/12/02, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a public hearing whenever it transfers property without auction to another public agency.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Doumit, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Buck, Eickmeyer, Ericksen, Jackley, McDermott, Orcutt, Pearson and Upthegrove.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with the approval of the Board of Natural Resources, may transfer or dispose or state land it owns without auction if the transactions are in lieu of condemnations, are transfers to public agencies, or are transfers to resolve trespass and property ownership disputes. Real property transferred or disposed of in this manner may only occur after an appraisal is conducted, the DNR receives at least fair market value, and the transaction is in the best interest of the state or affected trusts.

Public agencies that the DNR is allowed to transfer land to without an auction include any other state agency, any political subdivision, municipal corporations, quasi-municipal corporations, special purpose districts, local service districts, any federal agency, and any Indian tribe recognized by the federal government.

Summary of Bill:

Prior to transferring any real property without auction to a public agency, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must hold a public hearing on the proposal in the county where the state land is located. The hearing must be advertised in the appropriate local newspaper and the DNR must issue a news release to printed and electronic media in the area where the land is located. The hearing process is unnecessary in cases where the Legislature has directed the transfer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: The Department of Natural Resources must already hold public hearings for many of their actions, and it is fitting to include transfers to other public agencies. Communities are more responsive to transfers if they are made aware of the transaction and given an opportunity to comment.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Rockefeller, prime sponsor; and Patty Henson, Department of Natural Resources.