

March 4, 2025

MN State Senate

RE: SF3480

I would like to express my dissatisfaction with the proposed transfer of the White Earth State Forest to the White Earth Band. I have lived in Clearwater County for 33 years and along with my family have enjoyed using this forest for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling and four wheeling. In addition, we have enjoyed the beauty of the forest that is provided.

I believe the use of the forest will be diminished if this transfer is allowed to happen. First of all, the management of the forest will no longer be in the interest of all citizens as it would be managed for the benefit of White Earth Band. This will result in restrictions and curtailment of present use. I know you propose to keep access open to all but note how the White Earth Band has restricted the Heart Lake access nearby to all citizens. This transfer is not in the best interest of the citizens of Minnesota.

In addition, the proposed transfer will result in conflicts with the management of adjacent properties. Clearwater, Becker and Mahnomen Counties own a vast amount of property in this area. Much of these lands are managed along with the MN DNR for recreational and logging purposes. The loggers will be impeded by change of land ownership as will the recreation users. If you don't believe this look at the Beltrami State Forest that is intermingled with Red Lake Reservation land.

There is also an economic impact to this transfer. The state will no longer be able to collect from logging sales. There will be a decrease in hunting and fishing licenses by people who use these lands. There will be a decrease in sales of snowmobile and ATV licenses as some people only use this forest for their outdoor enjoyment.

This bill be a steppingstone to transferring the Beltrami State Forest to the Red Lake Nation, the Chippewa State Forest to the Leech Lake Band, or any number of state forests to various bands. These State Forests were established for all citizens of Minnesota and let's keep it that way.

I ask that consideration of this bill be dropped as the land should be owned by the State and managed by the State for all citizens of Minnesota.

Sincerely,



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