

April 16, 2024

Honorable Founj Hawj
3231 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155



Honorable Justin Eichorn
2235 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hawj and Ranking Minority Member Eichorn,

Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is pleased to offer full support of the provision from Sen. Kunesh's bill, SF 4250, that directs the School Trust Lands director to study and issue a report on the recreational use of school trust lands in Minnesota.

We know Minnesotans are active in the outdoors in many ways – boating, hunting, fishing, ATV, biking, snowmobiling (maybe not this year) etc. Many of these activities are done on school trust lands. Yet the beneficiaries of the trust lands, our students, do not see the full potential for revenue for those lands we use every day, and each season.

As such, this study can provide more information on where recreational activities occur and where school trust lands should be compensated for use of the lands held in trust for the beneficiaries – the public school students in Minnesota.

Another advantage to identifying where these activities are occurring is that we can place signage on these recreational pieces of property to help educate all Minnesotans and students on school trust lands and their value and how they generate revenue to contribute to public education.

In any discussion on the issue of school trust lands it is good to remind the legislators that when you make a decision involving the trust you are acting as a trustee. So, it is also important to remind the committee of some of the Duties of a Trustee: undivided loyalty, make the trust assets productive to generate income and to keep and render accounts.

Each of you on the committee is a trustee of the school trust lands. In your role as trustees of the Permanent School Trust, the information outlined in this bill would be a crucial first step to eventually fairly compensate the trust.

This report is what is needed to assist you in fulfilling your role as a trustee.

We urge you to support and pass this bill so the beneficiaries – our students - receive the full benefits of being trust fund babies.

