

2019 Memorandum in Support

Bill: S2026-A by Senator Little and A1625-A by Assembly Member Jones

Title: Approves land transactions relating to the implementation of the land exchange for the forest preserve health and safety land account and public utility improvements.

The Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) Supports this Legislation

This legislation would approve land transactions relating to the implementation of the land exchange for the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account and Public Utility Improvements. The Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account provides for a Forest Preserve Land Bank that may be used to eliminate bridge hazards, dangerous curves and grades on county or town highways; the relocation and reconstruction and maintenance of roads up to 1 mile in length; and for water wells and necessary appurtenances when necessary to meet drinking water quality standards. The Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account also permits the Forest Preserve of the Adirondack Park and the Catskill Park public utility lines (limited to electric, telephone, broadband, water or sewer lines) to be buried or co-located in the widths of state, county, or town highways.

The creation of the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account was predicated on the acquisition of additional land for incorporation into the Forest Preserve which is described in this legislation and is the purpose of and need for this legislation. The land described in this legislation for incorporation into the Forest Preserve, which equals 1,184.8 acres, must be determined by the legislature to be at least equal in value to 250 acres of forest preserve land that will be used for projects as part of the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account. Given that the acreage in this legislation is over four times the acreage of land in the land bank, it is highly likely that these parcels collectively exceed the value of the small parcels of land that will be used for the types of projects listed above that constitute the 250-acre Land Bank known as the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account.

The nearly 30,000 members of the Adirondack Mountain Club care deeply for the Forest Preserve and feel strongly that the environmental integrity of these special lands must be protected. We also realize that public safety concerns along the roadways throughout the Catskill and Adirondack Forest Preserve must be addressed for residents and visitors. This legislation facilitates the implementation of the Forest Preserve Health and Safety Land Account, which protects the Forest Preserve and allows for the correction of public safety issues.

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