

HB 2551 -- LANDS ACQUIRED THROUGH SETTLEMENT FUNDS

SPONSOR: Ross

The Department of Natural Resources and all other state departments, agencies, or entities must sell any property interest to land purchased in fiscal years 2016 through 2018 through legal settlement funds administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The Office of Administration must administer the sale for the selling agency, department or entity and the purchase price must be at least fair market value. Any properties to be sold must be sold in tracts of at least 40 acres, unless the property is within a recorded scenic easement, in which case the property must be sold in tracts of at least 300 acres.

Military veterans and the immediate family of any military member killed in action or declared missing in action must be given preference for the purchase in the public auction. Any property not purchased by veterans or family of certain military members must then be offered to the general public at public auction. Proceeds of the sale of the property must be used for the First Steps Program.

Any condition, restrictions, dedication, covenant, or other encumbrance conveyed with the property is null and void and a new covenant appurtenant is included in the land conveyance stating that the land cannot be sold to, leased, or otherwise controlled by a state or federal agency. The proceeds of the sale of the property will be used to implement the commission's plan for primary restoration projects.

After August 28, 2018, the bill also prohibits the department and all other state departments, agencies, or entities from purchasing property interest through legal settlement funds administered by the Department of Natural Resources. Any taxpayer in the state has standing to enforce these requirements and will be entitled to reasonable attorney's fees.

This bill contains a severability clause.