

March 1, 2024

To whom it may concern,

There is a bill working its way through the Minnesota legislature (Senate File 3480 and House File 4304). The bill appears to have significant ramifications that change how tracts of land within the White Earth State Forest will be managed in the future.

The Chairman of the White Earth government has given full-throated support of the bill as it stands, and that is worrisome.

Our homes on Bad Medicine Lake are located on reservation land. Should this bill become law, it is possible that we will lose access to our homes in which we are heavily invested. That is just one issue and it will affect many residents in the impacted area.

Northern Minnesota offers many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. The loss of access to forest land, lakes and trails will close the door on hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, four-wheeling, and other recreational activities. Business owners, large and small, fear the loss of tourism and its economic impact on their livelihood.

Governor Walz promised One Minnesota and transparency in government. This bill pits one people against another, and the lack of public announcements and scheduled hearings makes it appear the authors are sneaking it through to passage.

Transfer of public lands must include the protection of the rights of all. One injustice on top of another injustice does not equal justice. This bill in its present form has no such protections. Passage of it will set back the working and neighborly relationships that White Earth members and non-members have held close for decades.

Our Founders formed our magnificent Democracy guided in part by the democratic processes of the Tribes in the original colonies. We should apply those principles and proceed to address this in a deliberate, thoughtful, researched approach that includes all of us. For that to happen, this bill needs to be changed.

Please see attached list of people who can provide additional information:

Midnight Riders Snowmobile Club
Lake Park, MN
(701) 866-1580
midnite_riders@outlook.com

NorthWoods Trail Reapers
Snowmobile Club
(218) 573-3631

forestridersmn@gmail.com

Ultra Snowmobile Club
Wayne Schlauderaff
(218) 849-3069
Detroit Lakes, MN 56502

Minnesota Deer Hunters Assn
Jared Mazurek, Executive Director jaredmazurek@mndeerhunters.com
(218) 327-1103
460 Peterson Rd
Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744

Becker County Coalition of Lake Associations
David Oberlander, President
PO Box 1553
Detroit Lakes, MN 56502
Tel: (218) 443-4085

Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations hccolamn@gmail.com
Sharon Natzel, President sharonmnatzel@gmail.com
PO Box 746
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Bruce Cox
Tel: Clearwater County Land Commissioner
218 694-6227

Becker County Natural Resources Management Department
Tel: 218 847-0099

North Country Trail (New York to North Dakota Trail, under National Parks)
Ray Vlasek, Past President, local chapter (current president out of the area)
46522 Wildwood Trail
Ponsford, MN
Tel: 218 573-3243

White Earth Chairman: Michael Fairbanks
tel: (218) 850-0214