

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND ELEVEN

S.P. 147 - L.D. 514

An Act Regarding Conveyance of Easements across Railroad Rights-of-way

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §6209, sub-§6, as amended by PL 1993, c. 728, §13, is further amended to read:

6. Legislative approval. ~~Land~~ Except as provided in subsection 7, land acquired under this chapter may not be sold or used for purposes other than those stated in this chapter, unless approved by a 2/3 majority of the Legislature.

Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §6209, sub-§7 is enacted to read:

7. Conveyance of an access easement across a rail trail. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands within the Department of Conservation, with the approval of the Governor and the Commissioner of Conservation, may sell or otherwise convey in accordance with Title 12, section 1814-A access rights by easement across a rail trail acquired under this chapter.

For the purposes of this subsection, "rail trail" means a former railroad right-of-way in which the Department of Conservation holds an ownership interest and that is:

- A. No longer used for rail service; and
- B. Managed by the Department of Conservation for use as a recreational trail.

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §598, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 639, §1, is amended to read:

4. Reduced. "Reduced" means a reduction in the acreage of an individual parcel or lot of designated land under section 598-A. "Reduced" does not mean a reduction in the value of the property. "Reduced" does not mean the conveyance of an access right by easement in accordance with section 1814-A.

Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §598, sub-§5, as amended by PL 1997, c. 678, §7, is further amended to read:

5. Substantially altered. "Substantially altered," in the use of designated lands, means changed so as to significantly alter physical characteristics in a way that frustrates the essential purposes for which that land is held by the State. The essential purposes of state parks, historic sites, public access sites, facilities for boats and the Allagash Wilderness Waterway are the protection, management and improvement of these properties for public recreation, conservation, scenic values, nature appreciation, historic preservation and interpretation, public access and related purposes. The essential purposes of public reserved and nonreserved lands are the protection, management and improvement of these properties for the multiple use objectives established in section 1847. The essential purposes of lands acquired through the Land for Maine's Future Board that are not held by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife or by the Department of Conservation are the protection, management and improvement of those lands for recreation, conservation, farming, open space, plant and animal habitat, scenic values, public access and related purposes. The essential purposes of state-owned wildlife management areas and game farms are the protection, management and improvement of those properties for fish and wildlife habitat and propagation, hunting, trapping, fishing, recreation, propagation and harvesting of forest and other natural products and related purposes. "Substantially altered" does not mean the conveyance of an access right by easement in accordance with section 1814-A.

Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §1814-A is enacted to read:

§1814-A. Easements across rail trails

To the extent permitted by the deed or other instrument of ownership, the director, with the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, may sell or otherwise convey a right of access by easement across a rail trail as provided in this section. For the purposes of this section, "rail trail" means a former railroad right-of-way that is no longer used for rail service, in which the department has an ownership interest and that is managed by the department for use as a recreational trail.

1. Notice. At least 30 days prior to conveying a right of access by easement under this section, the director shall notify interested parties of the proposed conveyance, providing the location and purpose of the access easement and the anticipated date of conveyance. The notice must provide a name and contact information for a person at the bureau to whom inquiries may be made and comments submitted. For the purposes of this section, "interested parties" means owners of property abutting the parcel on which the proposed right of access is located, local trail clubs, statewide trail associations, the municipality in which the proposed easement is located, the Land for Maine's Future Board, each Legislator and other persons with a known interest in the use of the segment of the rail trail affected by the proposed conveyance.

2. Terms of conveyance. The access easement must include terms that ensure the transaction does not unreasonably interfere with the safety, maintenance and continuity of the rail trail. The access easement must ensure that public investment in the rail trail is protected by a negotiated exchange of value. The exchange of value may include, but is not limited to, negotiated improvements to the rail trail or payment of survey, title and appraisal expenses associated with the conveyance of the right of access by easement.

3. Proceeds from sale of an access easement. Proceeds from the sale of a right of access by easement under this section must be deposited in the Maine State Parks and Recreational Facilities Development Fund established under section 1825.

4. Opportunity for review by legislative committee. A Legislator receiving notification under subsection 1 may notify the director of concerns and may in writing request review of the proposed access easement by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over parks and lands matters. A Legislator requesting a review under this subsection shall notify the chairs of the joint standing committee of the request.

When a request for legislative review is received under this subsection, the director may not finalize the transfer until the legislative committee has met and reviewed the proposed transaction.

In House of Representatives, 2011

Read twice and passed to be enacted.

..... Speaker

In Senate, 2011

Read twice and passed to be enacted.

..... President

Approved 2011

..... Governor