

1 AN ACT concerning the Prairie Wind Trail.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Prairie Wind Trail Property Transfer Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative statement. Between the years of 1991  
7 and 2002, the Department of Natural Resources expended \$408,085  
8 to acquire 281.502 acres of real property, in the counties of  
9 Coles, Douglas and Moultrie, with the intention of constructing  
10 a recreational trail for use by the general public. The  
11 intended recreational trail was not constructed because the  
12 Department of Natural Resources was not able to acquire a  
13 contiguous linear parcel of real property sufficient to  
14 construct an uninterrupted recreational trail.

15 Between the years of 1995 and 2011, the Department of  
16 Natural Resources transferred 47.777 acres of real property to  
17 several private and public entities. These transfers were  
18 completed in accordance with Public Acts 88-369, 89-29, 89-223,  
19 90-760, 91-824, and 96-316.

20 Between 1991 and 2013, the Department of Natural Resources  
21 expended \$207,425.89 in legal defense expenses associated with  
22 the process of acquiring and holding title to the real property  
23 constituting the planned Prairie Wind Trail. (See Hemingway v.

1 American Premium Underwriters, Inc., 97-MR-5, Sixth Circuit,  
2 Douglas County, Illinois and Ag Farms, Inc. v. American Premium  
3 Underwriters, Inc., 2002-MR-6, Sixth Circuit, Moultrie County,  
4 Illinois.)

5 The General Assembly finds that transferring the real  
6 property known as the Prairie Wind Trail to adjacent owners is  
7 a public benefit to avoid further expenditure of legal defense  
8 expenses.

9 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

10 "Adjacent owner" means an owner of real property with a  
11 common boundary to parcels comprising the planned Prairie Wind  
12 Trail owned by the Department of Natural Resources.

13 "Department" means the Department of Natural Resources of  
14 the State of Illinois.

15 "Prairie Wind Trail" means real property in the counties of  
16 Coles, Douglas and Moultrie that is owned by the Department of  
17 Natural Resources and was acquired between the years of 1991  
18 and 2002 with the intention of constructing a recreational  
19 trail for use by the general public.

20 Section 15. Authority to convey real estate. The Department  
21 may transfer and convey all or part of the real estate acquired  
22 for the Prairie Wind Trail as provided in this Act. In order to  
23 facilitate the transfers authorized by this Act, the Secretary  
24 of State shall establish a repository for the deeds, surveys,

1 and related materials for each parcel within the Secretary of  
2 State Index Department.

3 Section 20. Transfer process.

4 (a) Notwithstanding any provision of the State Property  
5 Control Act, an adjacent owner may request the transfer of a  
6 limited portion of the Prairie Wind Trail in accordance with  
7 this Act. If an adjacent owner desires transfer of a portion of  
8 the Prairie Wind Trail, the adjacent owner shall provide notice  
9 to the Department, accompanied by the following:

10 (1) a title search proving ownership or a certified  
11 copy of the recorded deed for the adjacent real property;

12 (2) a copy of the most recent real property tax  
13 assessment for the adjacent real property; and

14 (3) a notarized affidavit executed by the owner of the  
15 adjacent real property affirming current ownership of the  
16 adjacent real property.

17 (b) The real estate transferred to an adjacent owner  
18 pursuant to this Act may not extend beyond an area encompassed  
19 by:

20 (1) the common property boundary;

21 (2) the center line of the Prairie Wind Trail; and

22 (3) lines extending from the boundary of the common  
23 boundary of the real estate to the center line of the  
24 Prairie Wind Trail.

25 (c) Upon receipt of notice, the Department shall determine

1 whether the adjacent owner has demonstrated ownership of the  
2 real estate with a common boundary to the Prairie Wind Trail  
3 and compliance with subsection (a) of this Section.

4 (d) If the adjacent owner demonstrates ownership of the  
5 real estate with a common boundary to the Prairie Wind Trail  
6 and compliance with subsection (a) of this Section, the  
7 Department shall notify the adjacent owner and schedule a real  
8 estate closing at a mutually agreeable time and place. The  
9 adjacent owner is responsible to pay all filing fees, taxes,  
10 and costs associated with closing the real estate transaction.

11 (e) If a person does not demonstrate ownership of the real  
12 estate with a common boundary to the Prairie Wind Trail or  
13 compliance with subsection (a) of this Section, the Department  
14 shall reject the request to transfer any portion of the Prairie  
15 Wind Trail to that person.

16 (f) If the Department receives a request to transfer any  
17 portion of the Prairie Wind Trail that is the subject of any  
18 pending action filed in any federal or State court, that  
19 requested portion of the Prairie Wind Trail may not be  
20 transferred by the Department until a final judgment is  
21 rendered in the pending action.

22 (g) In the case of 2 or more parties claiming ownership of  
23 all or the same adjacent property, the Department shall not  
24 transfer any property of the requested portion of the Prairie  
25 Wind Trail until an agreed-upon settlement between the  
26 conflicting parties is made or until a final judgment is made

1 in any action related to the adjacent property in a court of  
2 competent jurisdiction.

3 (h) Upon a final judgment in favor of the requesting party  
4 or dismissal of all lawsuits concerning real estate for which a  
5 transfer has been requested, the Department shall transfer that  
6 real estate, provided that it meets the other requirements of  
7 this Act.

8 Section 25. Time limitations. The Department shall begin  
9 accepting requests to transfer portions of the Prairie Wind  
10 Trail on the effective date of this Act. The Department shall  
11 not accept any request received more than 2 years after the  
12 effective date of this Act. During this time period, the  
13 Department shall hold a public hearing in the counties of  
14 Moultrie and Douglas regarding the transfer of portions of the  
15 Prairie Wind Trail. The hearing shall provide an opportunity  
16 for adjacent owners to petition the Department. Notice shall be  
17 given by public advertisement in a newspaper in general  
18 circulation in the Prairie Wind Trail area. The notice shall  
19 provide the date, time, and location of the public hearings and  
20 provide information regarding the transfer of real property.

21 Section 30. Review. Any determinations required by this Act  
22 and any actions to transfer real estate are within the sole  
23 discretion of the Department and are not subject to judicial or  
24 administrative review.

1           Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
2 becoming law.