



# NEWS RELEASE

April 4, 2024

## Rethinking Land Transfer Proposals

**By: Sen. Green, Reps. Bliss and Grossell**

Recently we have been made aware of several controversial bills that would transfer portions of the White Earth State Forest and Upper Red Lake, state-owned land, to the White Earth and Red Lake Tribes respectively. These particular bills are concerning for a number of reasons, one of them being the fact that the authors of these bills sought little to no input from local stakeholders, affected landowners, legislators, or other members of our community. These are significant proposals that deserve our attention and honest deliberation: they are not to be taken lightly.

In response, we (Sen. Green, Reps. Bliss and Grossell) are announcing our plan to help prevent issues like these now and in the future.

Our bill would ensure that stakeholders come to a consensus before any land transfer bills are rushed through the Legislature by requiring a supermajority of votes in both the House and the Senate to become law. Currently, a simple majority is all that is needed to transfer state-owned land below its current market value. The Legislature already requires a 2/3 vote to pass other measures, for example when the state borrows money for infrastructure projects, so we believe that this same level of agreement, scrutiny, and compromise should be applied when bills are being considered that would affect hunters, sportsmen, farmers, landowners, local communities, and other stakeholders.

This bill would not prevent land transfers but would require greater collaboration and coalition building to find solutions that work for every stakeholder. Bills regarding the transfer of state-owned land are significant, and we believe that rushing these bills through without consulting stakeholders only causes more consternation, stress, and disagreement between stakeholders. We should require a broad consensus to ensure cooperation with all parties.

The bill, HF 5271, was just introduced on Thursday 4/4. We hope you'll join us in asking the DFL majority for a hearing before time runs out this session. Let's work together to foster collaboration between our neighbors and find solutions that work for our area.