



March 29, 2022

Memorandum of Support A.0794/S.5333

A.0794 Jones/S.5333 Breslin Authorizes the state to convey certain forest preserve land; such sale shall be subject to legislative approval and the proceeds of such conveyance shall be used for acquisitions to the forest preserve.

Protect the Adirondacks supports a new Constitutional Amendment (A.0794 Jones/S.5333 Breslin) for Article 14, Section 1, the “forever wild” clause of the NYS Constitution to authorize the sale of 92 acres of a former prison compound in the Town of Brighton, Franklin County. This prison compound was formerly a tuberculosis sanatorium and an annex to a private college prior to conversion as a state prison. Over 200 acres of forestlands surrounding the 92 acres of the former prison complex was reclassified by the NYS Adirondack Park Agency from a “State Administrative” classification to “Wild Forest” and will remain in the forever wild Forest Preserve.

This amendment is necessary because under the law all state owned and utilized lands in the Forest Preserve counties of the Adirondack Park and Catskill Park are Forest Preserve. These lands cannot be sold or leased, nor can the trees thereon be harvested, without a constitutional amendment. This amendment affirms that important principle and necessity. The State Senate passed the companion bill S.5333 in 2021.

Protect the Adirondacks was involved in efforts to try and work out a transfer of these lands to area local governments under a different Article 14 amendment, so this property could be used for a variety of public purposes. We still believe that’s a better use of this facility than sale to a private owner. Unfortunately, that effort does not enjoy support from either the Executive or from enough local government leaders in the Franklin County and tri-lakes area of the Adirondack Park. Given this reality, removal from the Forest Preserve and sale of these lands is the only viable option.

Occupied by two dozen buildings, these elands possess no important open space, natural resource, or public recreation value.

The new Amendment reads:

NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING PROVISIONS AND SUBJECT TO LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL PRIOR TO ACTUAL TRANSFER OF TITLE, THE LAND DEVELOPED AS A PRIVATE TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL, PRIVATE COLLEGE ANNEX AND A STATE PRISON, COMPRISING FORTY-EIGHT STRUCTURES MAY BE CONVEYED BY THE STATE AT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SALE UP TO NINETY-TWO ACRES OF LAND ALONG STATE ROUTE 86, PART OF LOT 78, TOWNSHIP 18, GREAT TRACT 1, MACOMB'S PURCHASE IN THE TOWN OF BRIGHTON, FRANKLIN COUNTY, UPON THE CONDITION THAT ANY REVENUE DERIVED FROM SUCH CONVEYANCE BE PAID INTO

AN ACCOUNT OF THE STATE TO BE USED ONLY FOR ACQUISITIONS TO THE
FOREST PRESERVE.

Passage of this amendment is important for the Town of Brighton and for the economic and community development of the area. This legislation constitutes “first passage” of a new Constitutional Amendment in the State Assembly, matching first passage in the State Senate in 2021. “Second passage” would take place in the next successive Legislature, in 2023-2024. Then this amendment would then need to be approved by the voters in November of 2023 or 2024.

For all of these reasons, Protect the Adirondacks supports A.0794.

For more information:

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