

# Comment Report

SSB 3129

A bill for an act relating to restrictions on the acquisition of real property by the department of natural resources.(See SF 2324.)

Subcommittee Members: Shipley-CH, Bennett, Sweeney

Date: 01/31/2024

Time: 09:30 AM

Location: Room 315

**Name:** Thomas Reardon

**Comment:** most Iowans, for all types of recreation from birdwatching to hunting. As a former biologist I know there is also a great need for wild places for the education of the next generation. Yet Iowa competes with Kansas in a race to the bottom of the barrel in the amount of public lands available to us. In this area, several years ago INHF and The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the DNR acquired over 500 acres of an old farm, with existing native prairie to be turned over to the DNR. Now, Green Hills WMA, close to an urban area, provides opportunities for untrammelled hiking, hunting, and educational opportunities. Any legislation to restrict the DNR's ability to acquire much needed land for public purposes is against the interests and health of Iowans (at 75 I need places to, as they say keep on moving to keep on moving). And, as an aside, I'm a bit confused by the language. Aren't most auctions by willful sellers attempting to get the best price for the land after all, this isn't the 1930s.

**Name:** Thomas Reardon

**Comment:** As an avid hiker, photographer, and angler, public lands are essential to the quality of life for myself and most Iowans, for all types of recreation from birdwatching to hunting. As a former biologist I know there is also a great need for wild places for the education of the next generation. Yet Iowa competes with Kansas in a race to the bottom of the barrel in the amount of public lands available to us. In this area, several years ago INHF and The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the DNR acquired over 500 acres of an old farm, with existing native prairie to be turned over to the DNR. Now, Green Hills WMA, close to an urban area, provides opportunities for untrammelled hiking, hunting, and educational opportunities. Any legislation to restrict the DNR's ability to acquire much needed land for public purposes is against the interests and health of Iowans (at 75 I need places to, as they say keep on moving to keep on moving). And, as an aside, I'm a bit confused by the language. Aren't most auctions by willful sellers attempting to get the best price for the land after all, this isn't the 1930s.

**Name:** Garth Meinhardt

**Comment:** As a hunter, angler, hiker and someone who loves the outdoors I have great concerns about restricting the DNR from acquiring property in a fair and open manner to add to public use for Iowans. Iowa is almost dead last when it comes to how much land is held in the public trust. We are 47th out of 50 states and less than 3% of this state is open to the public for hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. I was born and grew up in this state and have developed a love for the outdoors. It's something I want to pass on to my children and enjoy with my family. If we are going to restrict the DNR from creating new places for Iowans to enjoy, it will be a great detriment to all of us and our ability to enjoy the spaces we live in. Land held in public trust by the DNR is not a bad thing. It allows every person to enjoy the natural resources Iowa provides. In theory it would force our elected officials to take a stake in the management and

conservation of those lands so that they may be passed on to our future generations. Allowing the DNR to acquire land that is put up for sale or donated should not be restricted. It is a good thing where we can work together to keep outdoor places healthy and allow our children, and children's children to use them. This should be the goal.