

§1852. Transfer or lease of public reserved lands

1. Transfer of management responsibility to other state agencies. Whenever a particular portion of the public reserved lands is to be used, under the management plan under section 1847, subsection 2, for a dominant use that is within the particular expertise of another agency of the State, the commissioner, with the consent of the Governor and the state agency involved, may transfer to that other state agency the responsibility for the management of that particular portion of the public reserved lands.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

2. Public roads. The bureau may grant the right to construct and maintain public roads.
[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

3. Lease of public reserved land to other state agencies. With the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, the bureau may lease the right to use parcels of public reserved land to other agencies of the State for a period not exceeding 25 years for purposes of protecting, enhancing or developing the natural, scenic or wilderness qualities or recreational, scientific or educational uses. Each such lease must contain a provision that authorizes the bureau to terminate the lease at any time when the bureau in its sole discretion determines that termination is in the best interests of the State. No adjustment or compensation may be due any lessee under this subsection on account of such a termination.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

4. Lease of public reserved land for utilities and rights-of-way. The bureau may lease the right, for a term not exceeding 25 years, to:

- A. Set and maintain or use poles, electric power transmission and telecommunication transmission lines and facilities, roads, bridges and landing strips; [IB 2021, c. 1, §1 (AMD).]
- B. Lay and maintain or use pipelines and railroad tracks; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]
- C. Establish and maintain or use other rights-of-way. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

Any such poles, transmission lines and facilities, landing strips, pipelines and railroad tracks under this subsection are deemed to substantially alter the uses of the land within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 23, and a lease or conveyance for the purpose of constructing and operating such poles, transmission lines and facilities, landing strips, pipelines and railroad tracks under this subsection may not be granted without first obtaining the vote of 2/3 of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature.

Notwithstanding Title 1, section 302 or any other provision of law to the contrary, this subsection applies retroactively to September 16, 2014.

[IB 2021, c. 1, §1 (AMD).]

5. Lease of public reserved land for private uses. The director may lease campsites, garages, depots, warehouses and other structures located on public reserved land, or sites for the same, for a term not exceeding 5 years and also:

- A. May grant options to renew such leases for a further term not to exceed 15 years in the case of a commercial use that in the judgment of the director requires the option to secure adequate financing for the maintenance or improvement of facilities located on public reserved land; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]
- B. In the case of leases acquired by the State on lands exchanged for public reserved lands, shall authorize, upon reasonable terms and conditions, the transfer of leasehold interests from one lessee of a residential campsite to another; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

C. With respect to persons with residential leasehold interests in public reserved lands on October 1, 1975 or on lands exchanged for public reserved lands or on lands acquired with Land for Maine's Future Board funds with respect to residential and camp owner leases in existence on or before November 30, 2005, shall enter into new leasehold agreements with those persons and thereafter renew those leases from time to time on reasonable terms and conditions as long as the lessee complies with the terms and conditions of the leases and with all applicable laws and rules of the State. [PL 2005, c. 462, Pt. C, §1 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 462, Pt. C, §2 (AFF).]

The annual fee for camp leases under this subsection may not exceed 10% of the fair market value of the land, as determined once during each 5-year lease term by the State Tax Assessor. Notwithstanding this subsection, there must be a minimum annual camp lease fee of \$150.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2005, c. 462, Pt. C, §1 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 462, Pt. C, §2 (AFF).]

6. Lease of public reserved lands for industrial and commercial purposes. With the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, the bureau may lease mill privileges and other rights in land for industrial and commercial purposes; dam sites; dump sites; the rights to pen, construct, put in, maintain and use ditches, tunnels, conduits, flumes and other works for the drainage and passage of water; flowage rights; and other rights of value in the public reserved lands for a term not exceeding 10 years. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

7. Lease of public reserved lands to Federal Government. With the consent of the Governor and the commissioner and with the approval of the Legislature, the bureau may lease to the Federal Government the right to use public reserved lands.

[PL 1999, c. 240, §3 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

8. Lease of public reserved lands to municipalities. With the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, the bureau may lease the right to use parcels of public reserved land to municipalities and other political subdivisions of the State for a period not exceeding 25 years for purposes of protecting, enhancing or developing the natural, scenic or wilderness qualities or recreational, scientific or educational uses of the land. Each such lease must contain a provision that authorizes the bureau to terminate the lease at any time the bureau in its sole discretion determines that termination is in the best interests of the State. No adjustment or compensation may be due any lessee under this subsection on account of such a termination.

The director may lease to incorporated towns the right to manage timber on all or part of the public reserved lands within the boundaries of the towns in accordance with multiple use management plans, subject to the following conditions:

A. Public reserved lands acquired through land exchanges may not be leased under this subsection; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. A management plan submitted to the director by a town must be approved or disapproved by the director within 60 days of submission or the plan is deemed approved. The director shall conduct the same interagency reviews and apply the same standards in evaluating such management plans that are being applied to the bureau's own management plans as of the date of submission; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

C. The leases must be for a period not exceeding 15 years and may be renewed if the director determines that the town's management plans have been implemented and substantially complied with in a professionally acceptable manner; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

D. The director may terminate the lease at any time, without adjustment or compensation due any lessee, if the termination is in the best interests of the State. The director shall give 30 days' written notice before termination. The director shall hold a public hearing if requested by the lessee within 30 days of that notice. The director shall issue written notice of a final decision within 30 days of the hearing. This decision may be appealed to the Superior Court; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

E. Public access to lands leased under this subsection may not be unreasonably denied; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

F. No lease may convey any interest in lands affected other than those permitted by this section. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

9. Lease of public reserved land to private nonprofit organizations. With the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, the bureau may lease the right to use parcels of public reserved land to private, nonprofit organizations for a period not exceeding 25 years for purposes of protecting, enhancing or developing the natural, scenic or wilderness qualities or recreational, scientific or educational uses of the lands. Each such lease must contain a provision that authorizes the bureau to terminate the lease at any time when the bureau in its sole discretion determines that termination is in the best interests of the State. No adjustment or compensation may be due to any lessee under this subsection on account of that termination.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV); PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV).]

10. Lease for cultivating edible crops, hay or pasturage for livestock. Pursuant to the right to food as declared in the Constitution of Maine, Article I, Section 25 and consistent with section 598-A, the bureau, with the consent of the Governor and the commissioner, may lease the right to use parcels of public reserved land for purposes of cultivating edible crops, hay or pasturage for dairy animals or other livestock. Each lease must contain a provision that authorizes the bureau to terminate the lease at any time when the bureau in its sole discretion determines that termination is in the best interests of the State. The bureau may not issue any adjustment or compensation to any lessee under this subsection on account of that termination. The bureau, to the extent practicable, in establishing a lease under this subsection, may give priority consideration to individuals with a history of generational poverty or land dispossession in the United States or to individuals who are veterans. For purposes of this subsection, "veteran" means an individual who served in the United States Armed Forces and meets the definition of "veteran" under 38 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 3.1 or who has served or is currently serving in the Maine Army National Guard or Maine Air National Guard or the Reserves of the United States Armed Forces.

[PL 2025, c. 309, §18 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW). PL 1999, c. 240, §3 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 462, §C1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 462, §C2 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7 (REV). PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24 (REV). IB 2021, c. 1, §1 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 309, §18 (AMD).

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