

282.01 TAX-FORFEITED LANDS; CLASSIFICATION, SALE.

Subdivision 1. **Classification as conservation or nonconservation.** It is the general policy of this state to encourage the best use of tax-forfeited lands, recognizing that some lands in public ownership should be retained and managed for public benefits while other lands should be returned to private ownership. Parcels of land becoming the property of the state in trust under law declaring the forfeiture of lands to the state for taxes must be classified by the county board of the county in which the parcels lie as conservation or nonconservation. In making the classification the board shall consider the present use of adjacent lands, the productivity of the soil, the character of forest or other growth, accessibility of lands to established roads, schools, and other public services, their peculiar suitability or desirability for particular uses and the suitability of the forest resources on the land for multiple use, sustained yield management. The classification, furthermore, must encourage and foster a mode of land utilization that will facilitate the economical and adequate provision of transportation, roads, water supply, drainage, sanitation, education, and recreation; facilitate reduction of governmental expenditures; conserve and develop the natural resources; and foster and develop agriculture and other industries in the districts and places best suited to them.

In making the classification the county board may use information made available by any office or department of the federal, state, or local governments, or by any other person or agency possessing pertinent information at the time the classification is made. The lands may be reclassified from time to time as the county board considers necessary or desirable, except for conservation lands held by the state free from any trust in favor of any taxing district.

If the lands are located within the boundaries of an organized town, with taxable valuation in excess of \$20,000, or incorporated municipality, the classification or reclassification and sale must first be approved by the town board of the town or the governing body of the municipality in which the lands are located. The town board of the town or the governing body of the municipality is considered to have approved the classification or reclassification and sale if the county board is not notified of the disapproval of the classification or reclassification and sale within 60 days of the date the request for approval was transmitted to the town board of the town or governing body of the municipality. If the town board or governing body desires to acquire any parcel lying in the town or municipality by procedures authorized in this section, it must file a written application with the county board to withhold the parcel from public sale. The application must be filed within 60 days of the request for classification or reclassification and sale. The county board shall then withhold the parcel from public sale for six months. A municipality or governmental subdivision shall pay maintenance costs incurred by the county during the six-month period while the property is withheld from public sale, provided the property is not offered for public sale after

the six-month period. A clerical error made by county officials does not serve to eliminate the request of the town board or governing body if the board or governing body has forwarded the application to the county auditor. If the town board or governing body of the municipality fails to submit an application and a resolution of the board or governing body to acquire the property within the withholding period, the county may offer the property for sale upon the expiration of the withholding period.

Subd. 1a. **Conveyance; generally.** Tax-forfeited lands may be sold by the county board to an organized or incorporated governmental subdivision of the state for any public purpose for which the subdivision is authorized to acquire property or may be released from the trust in favor of the taxing districts on application of a state agency for an authorized use at not less than their value as determined by the county board. The commissioner of revenue may convey by deed in the name of the state a tract of tax-forfeited land held in trust in favor of the taxing districts to a governmental subdivision for an authorized public use, if an application is submitted to the commissioner which includes a statement of facts as to the use to be made of the tract and the need therefor and the recommendation of the county board.

Subd. 1b. **Conveyance; targeted neighborhood lands.** (a) Notwithstanding subdivision 1a, in the case of tax-forfeited lands located in a targeted neighborhood, as defined in section 469.201, subdivision 10, the commissioner of revenue shall convey by deed in the name of the state any tract of tax-forfeited land held in trust in favor of the taxing districts, to a political subdivision that submits an application to the commissioner of revenue and the recommendation of the county board.

(b) The application under paragraph (a) must include a statement of facts as to the use to be made of the tract, the need therefor, and a resolution, adopted by the governing body of the political subdivision, finding that the conveyance of a tract of tax-forfeited land to the political subdivision is necessary to provide for the redevelopment of land as productive taxable property. Deeds of conveyance issued under paragraph (a) are not conditioned on continued use of the property for the use stated in the application.

Subd. 1c. **Deed of conveyance; form; approvals.** The deed of conveyance for property conveyed for a public use must be on a form approved by the attorney general and must be conditioned on continued use for the purpose stated in the application.

Subd. 1d. **Reverter for failure to use; conveyance to state.** If after three years from the date of the conveyance a governmental subdivision to which tax-forfeited land has been conveyed for a specified public use as provided in this section fails to put the land to that use, or abandons that use, the governing body of the subdivision may, with the approval of the county board, purchase

the property for an authorized public purpose at the present appraised value as determined by the county board. In that case, the commissioner of revenue shall, upon proper written application approved by the county board, issue an appropriate deed to the subdivisions free of a use restriction and reverter. The governing body may also authorize the proper officers to convey the land, or the part of the land not required for an authorized public use, to the state of Minnesota. The officers shall execute a deed of conveyance immediately. The conveyance is subject to the approval of the commissioner and its form must be approved by the attorney general. A sale, lease, transfer, or other conveyance of tax-forfeited lands by a housing and redevelopment authority, a port authority, an economic development authority, or a city as authorized by chapter 469 is not an abandonment of use and the lands shall not be reconveyed to the state nor shall they revert to the state. A certificate made by a housing and redevelopment authority, a port authority, an economic development authority, or a city referring to a conveyance by it and stating that the conveyance has been made as authorized by chapter 469 may be filed with the county recorder or registrar of titles, and the rights of reverter in favor of the state provided by subdivision 1e will then terminate. No vote of the people is required for the conveyance.

Subd. 1e. **Notice and declaration of reversion.** If the tax-forfeited land is not either purchased or conveyed to the state in accordance with subdivision 1d, the commissioner of revenue shall by written instrument, in form approved by the attorney general, declare the land to have reverted to the state, and shall serve a notice of reversion, with a copy of the declaration, by certified mail upon the clerk or recorder of the governmental subdivision concerned. No declaration of reversion under this subdivision shall be made earlier than 60 days after the expiration of the three-year period described in subdivision 1d. The commissioner shall file the original declaration in the commissioner's office, with verified proof of service. The governmental subdivision may appeal to the district court of the county in which the land lies by filing with the court administrator a notice of appeal, specifying the grounds of appeal and the description of the land involved, mailing a copy of the notice of appeal by certified mail to the commissioner of revenue, and filing a copy for record with the county recorder or registrar of titles, all within 30 days after the mailing of the notice of reversion. The appeal shall be tried by the court in like manner as a civil action. If no appeal is taken as provided in this subdivision, the declaration of reversion is final. The commissioner of revenue shall file for record with the county recorder or registrar of titles, of the county within which the land lies, a certified copy of the declaration of reversion and proof of service.

Subd. 1f. **Land exchanges; Minneapolis.** A city of the first class with a population of 450,000, or over, or its board of park commissioners, which has acquired tax-forfeited land for a specified public use under this section, may convey the land in exchange for other land

of substantially equal worth located in the city. The land conveyed to the city, or its board of park commissioners, in exchange is subject to the public use and reversionary provisions of this section. The tax-forfeited land so conveyed is thereafter free from the public use and reversionary provisions of this section. The exchange shall in no way affect the mineral rights of the state of Minnesota, if any, in the lands exchanged.

Subd. 2. Conservation lands; county board supervision. Lands classified as conservation lands, unless reclassified as nonconservation lands, sold to a governmental subdivision of the state, designated as lands primarily suitable for forest production and sold as hereinafter provided, or released from the trust in favor of the taxing districts, as herein provided, will be held under the supervision of the county board of the county within which such parcels lie.

The county board may, by resolution duly adopted, declare lands classified as conservation lands as primarily suitable for timber production and as lands which should be placed in private ownership for such purposes. If such action be approved by the commissioner of natural resources, the lands so designated, or any part thereof, may be sold by the county board in the same manner as provided for the sale of lands classified as nonconservation lands. Such county action and the approval of the commissioner shall be limited to lands lying within areas zoned for restricted uses under the provisions of Laws 1939, chapter 340, or any amendments thereof.

The county board may, by resolution duly adopted, resolve that certain lands classified as conservation lands shall be devoted to conservation uses and may submit such resolution to the commissioner of natural resources. If, upon investigation, the commissioner of natural resources determines that the lands covered by such resolution, or any part thereof, can be managed and developed for conservation purposes, the commissioner shall make a certificate describing the lands and reciting the acceptance thereof on behalf of the state for such purposes. The commissioner shall transmit the certificate to the county auditor, who shall note the same upon the auditor's records and record the same with the county recorder. The title to all lands so accepted shall be held by the state free from any trust in favor of any and all taxing districts and such lands shall be devoted thereafter to the purposes of forestry, water conservation, flood control, parks, game refuges, controlled game management areas, public shooting grounds, or other public recreational or conservation uses, and managed, controlled, and regulated for such purposes under the jurisdiction of the commissioner of natural resources and the divisions of the department. In case the commissioner of natural resources shall determine that any tract of land so held by the state and situated within or adjacent to the boundaries of any governmental subdivision of the state is suitable for use by such subdivision for any authorized public purpose, the commissioner may convey such tract by deed in the name of the state to such subdivision upon the filing with the commissioner of a resolution adopted by a majority vote of all the members of the governing

body thereof, stating the purpose for which the land is desired. The deed of conveyance shall be upon a form approved by the attorney general conditioned upon continued use for the purpose stated in the resolution. All proceeds derived from the sale of timber, lease of hay stumpage, or other revenue from such lands under the jurisdiction of the natural resources commissioner shall be paid into the general fund of the state. The county auditor, with the approval of the county board, may lease conservation lands remaining under the jurisdiction of the county board and sell timber and hay stumpage thereon in the manner hereinafter provided, and all proceeds derived therefrom shall be distributed in the same manner as provided in section 282.04.

Subd. 3. Nonconservation lands; appraisal and sale. All parcels of land classified as nonconservation, except those which may be reserved, shall be sold as provided, if it is determined, by the county board of the county in which the parcels lie, that it is advisable to do so, having in mind their accessibility, their proximity to existing public improvements, and the effect of their sale and occupancy on the public burdens. Any parcels of land proposed to be sold shall be first appraised by the county board of the county in which the parcels lie. The parcels may be reappraised whenever the county board deems it necessary to carry out the intent of sections 282.01 to 282.13. In an appraisal the value of the land and any standing timber on it shall be separately determined. No parcel of land containing any standing timber may be sold until the appraised value of the timber on it and the sale of the land have been approved by the commissioner of natural resources. The commissioner shall base review of a proposed sale on the policy and considerations specified in subdivision 1. The decision of the commissioner shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for it. The commissioner's decision is exempt from the rulemaking provisions of chapter 14 and section 14.386 does not apply. The county may appeal the decision of the commissioner in accordance with chapter 14.

In any county in which a state forest or any part of it is located, the county auditor shall submit to the commissioner at least 60 days before the first publication of the list of lands to be offered for sale a list of all lands included on the list which are situated outside of any incorporated municipality. If, at any time before the opening of the sale, the commissioner notifies the county auditor in writing that there is standing timber on any parcel of such land, the parcel shall not be sold unless the requirements of this section respecting the separate appraisal of the timber and the approval of the appraisal by the commissioner have been complied with. The commissioner may waive the requirement of the 60-day notice as to any parcel of land which has been examined and the timber value approved as required by this section.

If any public improvement is made by a municipality after any parcel of land has been forfeited to the state for the nonpayment of taxes, and the improvement is assessed in whole or in part against the property benefited by it, the clerk of the municipality shall certify to the

county auditor, immediately upon the determination of the assessments for the improvement, the total amount that would have been assessed against the parcel of land if it had been subject to assessment; or if the public improvement is made, petitioned for, ordered in or assessed, whether the improvement is completed in whole or in part, at any time between the appraisal and the sale of the parcel of land, the cost of the improvement shall be included as a separate item and added to the appraised value of the parcel of land at the time it is sold. No sale of a parcel of land shall discharge or free the parcel of land from lien for the special benefit conferred upon it by reason of the public improvement until the cost of it, including penalties, if any, is paid. The county board shall determine the amount, if any, by which the value of the parcel was enhanced by the improvement and include the amount as a separate item in fixing the appraised value for the purpose of sale. In classifying, appraising, and selling the lands, the county board may designate the tracts as assessed and acquired, or may by resolution provide for the subdivision of the tracts into smaller units or for the grouping of several tracts into one tract when the subdivision or grouping is deemed advantageous for the purpose of sale. Each such smaller tract or larger tract must be classified and appraised as such before being offered for sale. If any such lands have once been classified, the board of county commissioners, in its discretion, may, by resolution, authorize the sale of the smaller tract or larger tract without reclassification.

Subd. 4. **Sale: method, requirements, effects.** The sale must be conducted by the county auditor at the county seat of the county in which the parcels lie, except that in St. Louis and Koochiching Counties, the sale may be conducted in any county facility within the county. The parcels must be sold for cash only and at not less than the appraised value, unless the county board of the county has adopted a resolution providing for their sale on terms, in which event the resolution controls with respect to the sale. When the sale is made on terms other than for cash only (1) a payment of at least ten percent of the purchase price must be made at the time of purchase, and the balance must be paid in no more than ten equal annual installments, or (2) the payments must be made in accordance with county board policy, but in no event may the board require more than 12 installments annually, and the contract term must not be for more than ten years. Standing timber or timber products must not be removed from these lands until an amount equal to the appraised value of all standing timber or timber products on the lands at the time of purchase has been paid by the purchaser. If a parcel of land bearing standing timber or timber products is sold at public auction for more than the appraised value, the amount bid in excess of the appraised value must be allocated between the land and the timber in proportion to their respective appraised values. In that case, standing timber or timber products must not be removed from the land until the amount of the excess bid allocated to timber or timber products has been paid in addition to the appraised value of the land. The purchaser is entitled to immediate possession, subject to the provisions of any existing valid lease made in behalf of the state.

For sales occurring on or after July 1, 1982, the unpaid balance of the purchase price is subject to interest at the rate determined pursuant to section 549.09. The unpaid balance of the purchase price for sales occurring after December 31, 1990, is subject to interest at the rate determined in section 279.03, subdivision 1a. The interest rate is subject to change each year on the unpaid balance in the manner provided for rate changes in section 549.09 or 279.03, subdivision 1a, whichever, is applicable. Interest on the unpaid contract balance on sales occurring before July 1, 1982, is payable at the rate applicable to the sale at the time that the sale occurred.

Subd. 5. Sale on terms, certificate; failure to comply. When sales hereafter are made on terms the purchaser shall receive a certificate from the county auditor in such form, consistent with the provisions of sections 282.01 to 282.13 and setting forth the terms of sale, as may be prescribed by the attorney general. Failure of the purchaser or any person claiming under the purchaser, to pay any of the deferred installments with interest, or the current taxes, or to comply with any conditions that may have been stipulated in the notice of sale or in the auditor's certificate herein provided for, shall constitute default; and the state may, by order of the county board, during the continuance of such default, declare such certificate canceled and take possession of such lands and may thereafter resell or lease the same in the same manner and under the same rules as other lands forfeited to the state for taxes are sold or leased. When the county board shall have adopted a resolution ordering the cancellation of such certificate or certificates and the cancellation shall have been completed in accord with section 282.40, then a reentry shall be deemed to have been made on the part of the state without any other act or deed, and without any right of redemption by the purchaser or any one claiming under the purchaser; and the original purchaser in default or any person claiming under the original purchaser, who shall remain in possession or enter thereon shall be deemed a willful trespasser and shall be punished as such.

When the cancellation of such certificate has been completed the county auditor shall cancel all taxes and tax liens, delinquent and current, and special assessments, delinquent or otherwise, imposed upon the lands described in the certificate after its issuance.

Subd. 6. Duties of commissioner after sale. When any sale has been made by the county auditor under sections 282.01 to 282.13, the auditor shall immediately certify to the commissioner of revenue such information relating to such sale, on such forms as the commissioner of revenue may prescribe as will enable the commissioner of revenue to prepare an appropriate deed if the sale is for cash, or keep necessary records if the sale is on terms; and not later than October 31 of each year the county auditor shall submit to the commissioner of revenue a statement of all instances wherein any payment of principal, interest, or current taxes on lands held under certificate, due or to be paid during the preceding calendar years, are still outstanding at the time such certificate is made. When such statement shows that a purchaser or the purchaser's assignee is

in default, the commissioner of revenue may instruct the county board of the county in which the land is located to cancel said certificate of sale in the manner provided by subdivision 5, provided that upon recommendation of the county board, and where the circumstances are such that the commissioner of revenue after investigation is satisfied that the purchaser has made every effort reasonable to make payment of both the annual installment and said taxes, and that there has been no willful neglect on the part of the purchaser in meeting these obligations, then the commissioner of revenue may extend the time for the payment for such period as the commissioner may deem warranted, not to exceed one year. On payment in full of the purchase price, appropriate conveyance in fee, in such form as may be prescribed by the attorney general, shall be issued by the commissioner of revenue, which conveyance must be recorded by the county and shall have the force and effect of a patent from the state subject to easements and restrictions of record at the date of the tax judgment sale, including, but without limitation, permits for telephone, telegraph, and electric power lines either by underground cable or conduit or otherwise, sewer and water lines, highways, railroads, and pipe lines for gas, liquids, or solids in suspension.

Subd. 7. County sales; notice, purchase price, disposition. The sale must commence at the time determined by the county board of the county in which the parcels are located. The county auditor shall offer the parcels of land in order in which they appear in the notice of sale, and shall sell them to the highest bidder, but not for a sum less than the appraised value, until all of the parcels of land have been offered. Then the county auditor shall sell any remaining parcels to anyone offering to pay the appraised value, except that if the person could have repurchased a parcel of property under section 282.012 or 282.241, that person may not purchase that same parcel of property at the sale under this subdivision for a purchase price less than the sum of all taxes, assessments, penalties, interest, and costs due at the time of forfeiture computed under section 282.251, and any special assessments for improvements certified as of the date of sale. The sale must continue until all the parcels are sold or until the county board orders a reappraisal or withdraws any or all of the parcels from sale. The list of lands may be added to and the added lands may be sold at any time by publishing the descriptions and appraised values. The added lands must be: (1) parcels of land that have become forfeited and classified as nonconservation since the commencement of any prior sale; (2) parcels that have been reappraised; (3) parcels that have been reclassified as nonconservation; or (4) other parcels that are subject to sale but were omitted from the existing list for any reason. The descriptions and appraised values must be published in the same manner as provided for the publication of the original list. Parcels added to the list must first be offered for sale to the highest bidder before they are sold at appraised value. All parcels of land not offered for immediate sale, as well as parcels that are offered and not immediately sold, continue to be held in trust by the state for the taxing districts interested in each

of the parcels, under the supervision of the county board. Those parcels may be used for public purposes until sold, as directed by the county board.

Subd. 7a. **City sales; alternate procedures.** Land located in a home rule charter or statutory city, or in a town which cannot be improved because of noncompliance with local ordinances regarding minimum area, shape, frontage or access may be sold by the county auditor pursuant to this subdivision if the auditor determines that a nonpublic sale will encourage the approval of sale of the land by the city or town and promote its return to the tax rolls. If the physical characteristics of the land indicate that its highest and best use will be achieved by combining it with an adjoining parcel and the city or town has not adopted a local ordinance governing minimum area, shape, frontage, or access, the land may also be sold pursuant to this subdivision. If the property consists of an undivided interest in land or land and improvements, the property may also be sold to the other owners under this subdivision. The sale of land pursuant to this subdivision shall be subject to any conditions imposed by the county board pursuant to section 282.03. The governing body of the city or town may recommend to the county board conditions to be imposed on the sale. The county auditor may restrict the sale to owners of lands adjoining the land to be sold. The county auditor shall conduct the sale by sealed bid or may select another means of sale. The land shall be sold to the highest bidder but in no event shall the land be sold for less than its appraised value. All owners of land adjoining the land to be sold shall be given a written notice at least 30 days prior to the sale.

This subdivision shall be liberally construed to encourage the sale and utilization of tax-forfeited land, to eliminate nuisances and dangerous conditions and to increase compliance with land use ordinances.

Subd. 8. **Minerals in tax-forfeited land and tax-forfeited stockpiled metallic minerals material subject to mining; procedures.** In case the commissioner of natural resources shall notify the county auditor of any county in writing that the minerals in any tax-forfeited land or tax-forfeited stockpiled metallic minerals material located on tax-forfeited land in such county have been designated as a mining unit as provided by law, or that such minerals or tax-forfeited stockpiled metallic minerals material are subject to a mining permit or lease issued therefor as provided by law, the surface of such tax-forfeited land shall be subject to disposal and use for mining purposes pursuant to such designation, permit, or lease, and shall be withheld from sale or lease by the county auditor until the commissioner shall notify the county auditor that such land has been removed from the list of mining units or that any mining permit or lease theretofore issued thereon is no longer in force; provided, that the surface of such tax-forfeited land may be leased by the county auditor as provided by law, with the written approval of the commissioner, subject to disposal and use for mining purposes as herein provided and to any special conditions

relating thereto that the commissioner may prescribe, also subject to cancellation for mining purposes on three months written notice from the commissioner to the county auditor.

Subd. 9. Ratification of old sales of tax-forfeited lands. Where a sale of tax-forfeited land under Mason's Supplement 1940, section 2139-15, was made prior to December 31, 1942, without first having the appraised value of the timber thereon approved by the commissioner of natural resources as therein provided, such sale may be ratified by the commissioner of revenue in the manner herein provided, if prior to the making of application therefor the entire purchase price of said tax-forfeited land has been paid.

Subd. 10. Ratification application, approval, effect. The purchaser at such sale or the county auditor of the county in which said land is located shall file an application for the ratification of the sale with the board of county commissioners of said county, submitting therewith a statement of the facts of the case and satisfactory proof that the purchase price of such land at the sale has been paid in full. Such application shall be considered by the county board and shall thereafter be submitted by it to the commissioner of revenue with the recommendation of the county board and of the county auditor in all cases wherein the auditor is not the applicant. The commissioner of revenue shall consider said application and, on determining that the conditions above referred to exist, shall make an order ratifying the sale of said tax-forfeited land and transmit a copy thereof to the county auditor of the county in which said tax-forfeited land is located. If any such sale be ratified by the commissioner of revenue, it shall not thereafter be subject to attack for failure to have the timber appraisal approved before the sale. If no conveyance by the state has theretofore been made, the county auditor, upon receipt of said order, shall request the issuance of an appropriate conveyance as provided for in said section 2139-15. If a conveyance has been made by the state of said land pursuant to said section 2139-15, said conveyance shall not thereafter be subject to attack on account of the failure to have the timber appraisal approved before the sale.

Subd. 11. Pending actions not affected. The provisions of subdivisions 9 to 11 shall not apply so as to prejudice the rights of any person in any action or proceeding heretofore commenced to the sale in any court of this state.

History: (2139-15) 1935 c 386 s 1; Ex1935 c 105 s 1; 1939 c 328 s 1; 1941 c 394 s 1; 1941 c 511 s 1; 1943 c 37 s 1; 1943 c 204 s 1,2; 1943 c 627 s 1-3; 1945 c 99 s 1; 1945 c 150 s 1,2; 1945 c 574 s 1; 1947 c 140 s 1; 1949 c 251 s 1; 1949 c 359 s 1; 1953 c 144 s 1; 1953 c 316 s 1; 1953 c 493 s 1; 1953 c 549 s 1; 1957 c 667 s 1-3; 1959 c 348 s 1; 1969 c 399 s 1; 1969 c 1129 art 10 s 2; 1973 c 582 s 3; 1974 c 278 s 1; 1976 c 181 s 2; 1978 c 674 s 60; 1980 c 437 s 13,14; 1982 c 424 s 63,130; 1982 c 511 s 24,25; 1982 c 523 art 39 s 5,6; 1983 c 222 s 19; 1983 c 247 s 121; 1983 c 342 art 15 s 30; 1984 c 443 s 1; 1985 c 300 s 13; 1Sp1985 c 14 art 20 s 14; 1986 c 444; 1Sp1986

c 3 art 1 s 82; 1987 c 291 s 211; 1989 c 328 art 6 s 1; 1990 c 480 art 8 s 14; 1990 c 604 art 3 s 37; 1991 c 291 art 12 s 19; 1992 c 511 art 2 s 27; 1993 c 11 s 1; 1994 c 416 art 1 s 36; 1997 c 231 art 8 s 5; 1999 c 243 art 13 s 8-10; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 3 s 59-63; 2003 c 127 art 5 s 33,46,47; 2004 c 221 s 45; 2004 c 262 art 2 s 8; 2008 c 277 art 1 s 60