7659

IN SENATE

June 12, 2012

Introduced by Sen. LITTLE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to providing for the settlement of a land dispute between the state and private parties with regard to parcels in township 40, Totten Crossfield Purchase, in the town of Long Lake, county of Hamilton

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Article 9 of the environmental conservation law is amended by adding a new title 19 to read as follows: 3

TITLE 19

TOWNSHIP FORTY SETTLEMENT ACT

SECTION 9-1901. LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE AND INTENT.

9-1903. DEFINITIONS.

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9-1905. LIST OF DISPUTED PARCELS.

9-1907. PROCESS FOR CLEARING TITLE.

9-1909. ATTORNEY GENERAL TO FILE SUIT.

9-1911. CONVEYANCES TO THE STATE. 10

9-1913. ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY JURISDICTION.

9-1915. NOTICE OF NONPARTICIPATION FORMAT.

S 9-1901. LEGISLATIVE PURPOSE AND INTENT. 13

YEARS, BOTH THE STATE AND PRIVATE 1. DURING THE LAST ONE HUNDRED PARTIES HAVE CLAIMED TITLE TO IDENTICAL PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP TOTTEN AND CROSSFIELD PURCHASE, IN THE TOWN OF LONG LAKE, COUNTY OF HAMILTON. INDEED, SOME PRIVATE PARTIES HAVE OCCUPIED AND IMPROVED A NUMBER OF SUCH PARCELS TO WHICH THE STATE CLAIMS TITLE AND, IN MANY CASES, BOTH THE STATE AND PRIVATE PARTIES HAVE PAID TAXES onPARCELS. IN THE LAST SEVERAL DECADES, THE STATE AND SOME PRIVATE PARTIES HAVE COMMENCED LITIGATION, AT SIGNIFICANT EXPENSE AND WITH LIMITED SUCCESS, TO ESTABLISH THEIR RESPECTIVE CLAIMS OVER DISPUTED PARCELS. RESULT OF LONGSTANDING CLAIMS TO DISPUTED PARCELS, THE FREE TRANSFER OF THE PARCELS HAS BEEN INHIBITED, THEREBY CREATING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HARDSHIP IN TOWNSHIP FORTY WHICH, IN TURN, HAS PREVENTED BOTH STATE AND PRIVATE PARTIES FROM THE FULL USE AND ENJOYMENT OF THEPARCELS.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

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LEGISLATURE HAS DETERMINED THAT THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IS NOT AN APPROPRI-ATE FORUM TO RESOLVE THESE LONGSTANDING TITLE DISPUTES AND THAT A STATU-3 TORY SOLUTION IS REQUIRED.

- THESE REASONS AND AS AUTHORIZED BY THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 5 ONE OF ARTICLE FOURTEEN OF THE STATE CONSTITUTION, THE LEGISLATURE FINDS THAT IT IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO COMPREHENSIVELY AND EXPEDITIOUSLY 7 RESOLVE THESE LONGSTANDING TITLE DISPUTES IN A MANNER WHICH IS FAIR AND EQUITABLE. THE LEGISLATURE FINDS THAT IT IS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE 8 9 STATE, THE COUNTY OF HAMILTON, THE TOWN OF LONG LAKE, AND THE PRIVATE 10 PARTIES WHO CLAIM TITLE TO PORTIONS OF TOWNSHIP FORTY TO RESOLVE THESE 11 TITLE DISPUTES IN A STRUCTURED AND EFFICIENT MANNER THAT RESULTS 12 INTERESTS, ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO CLARIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP 13 FOREST PRESERVE LANDS, AND THE QUIET ENJOYMENT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY.
- 14 3. THE LEGISLATURE FURTHER FINDS THAT RESOLUTION OF THESE 15 DISPUTES SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN A MANNER THAT ENSURES THE INTEGRITY OF FOREST PRESERVE IN THE ADIRONDACK PARK AND THAT RESULTS IN A NET 16 BENEFIT TO THE FOREST PRESERVE WHEN COMPARED TO THE CONTESTED PARCELS. 17
 - 4. THE LEGISLATURE FURTHER FINDS THAT THE TITLE DISPUTES ASSOCIATED WITH TOWNSHIP FORTY CONSTITUTE A UNIQUE SITUATION, FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE STATE, AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY IT IS EQUITABLE AND APPROPRIATE FOR THE STATE TO RELINQUISH ITS CLAIM OF TITLE TO DISPUTED PARCELS WITHIN THE TOWNSHIP. THIS RELINQUISHMENT OF CLAIMS TO TITLE SHALL NOT BE DEEMED PRECEDENT FOR THE RELINOUISHMENT OF CLAIMS TO TITLE WITH RESPECT TO OTHER LANDS OWNED BY THE STATE.
- 25 S 9-1903. DEFINITIONS.

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FOR PURPOSES OF THIS TITLE, THE FOLLOWING TERMS SHALL HAVE THE FOLLOW-27 ING MEANINGS:

- 1. "COUNTY" MEANS THE COUNTY OF HAMILTON.
- 2. "DISPUTED PARCEL" MEANS A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN TOWNSHIP TO WHICH BOTH THE STATE AND A PERSON CLAIM TITLE.
- "PERSON" MEANS ANY INDIVIDUAL, FIRM, PARTNERSHIP, ASSOCIATION, TRUST, LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY OR CORPORATION THAT CLAIMS TITLE TO A DISPUTED PARCEL.
 - 4. "TOWN" MEANS THE TOWN OF LONG LAKE, IN THE COUNTY OF HAMILTON.
- "TOWNSHIP FORTY" MEANS TOWNSHIP FORTY, TOTTEN AND CROSSFIELD PURCHASE.
- S 9-1905. LIST OF DISPUTED PARCELS.

THE FOLLOWING PARCELS OF LAND, IDENTIFIED BY THE COUNTY'S TWO THOUSAND TEN ASSESSMENT ROLLS AND THE COUNTY'S ONLINE MAPPING SYSTEM AS OF APRIL THOUSAND TWELVE, AND ANY SUBSEQUENT CONVEYANCES THEREFROM, ARE THE DISPUTED PARCELS THAT ARE THE SUBJECT OF THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE:

- 43 37.016-1-1.100
- 44 37.016-1-1.210
- 45 37.016-1-1.220
- 46 37.016-1-2
- 47 37.016-1-3
 - 37.016-1-4.110
- 49 37.016-1-4.120
- 50 37.016-1-4.131
- 51 37.016-1-4.132
- 37.016-1-4.140 52
- 53 37.016-1-4.150
- 54 37.016-1-4.160
- 55 37.016-1-4.200
- 56 37.016-1-4.300

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    S 9-1907. PROCESS FOR CLEARING TITLE.
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- EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SEND, BY FIRST CLASS MAIL, A LETTER TO EACH PERSON CLAIMING TITLE TO A DISPUTED PARCEL LISTED IN SECTION 9-1905 OF THIS TITLE, INFORMING THE PERSON THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT HAS ADOPTED AND LEGISLATION ENACTED THAT AUTHORIZES A RESOLUTION OF TITLE INCLUDING THE ISSUES ON DISPUTED PARCELS IN TOWNSHIP FORTY, DISPUTED PARCEL TO WHICH THEPERSON CLAIMS OWNERSHIP RIGHTS. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SEND A SEPARATE LETTER FOR EACH DISPUTED PARCEL. SUCH LETTER SHALL DESCRIBE THE PROCESS FOR RESOLVING TITLE SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE AND STATE THAT, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE STATE IS ESTOPPED FROM ASSERTING CLAIM OF TITLE TO THE DISPUTED PARCEL PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION SEVEN OF THIS SECTION, THE PERSON CLAIMING TITLE TO THE DISPUTED PARCEL SHALL ASSUME ALL THE RISK WITH RESPECT TO SUBDIVIDING OR ADDING NEW STRUCTURES IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DISPUTED PARCEL. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE A COPY OF EACH SUCH LETTER TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.
- 2. WITHIN NINETY DAYS OF THE RECEIPT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S LETTER, DURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION, A PERSON SHALL, FOR EACH DISPUTED PARCEL, EITHER:
- 53 A. NOTIFY THE DEPARTMENT IN WRITING, WITH A COPY TO THEATTORNEY 54 GENERAL AND THE TOWN, (I) THAT HE OR SHE WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS 55 FORTH IN THIS TITLE TO RESOLVE TITLE TO THE DISPUTED PARCEL OR PARCELS, AND (II) WHETHER HE OR SHE INTENDS TO PROVIDE AS A GIFT TO 56

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STATE A SPECIFIED PORTION OF A DISPUTED PARCEL IN FEE SIMPLE WITHOUT RESERVATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOREST PRESERVE OR A CONSERVATION EASEMENT TO THE TOWN RESTRICTING DEVELOPMENT OVER ALL OR A SPECIFIED PORTION OF A DISPUTED PARCEL, WITH A SECONDARY RIGHT OF ENFORCEMENT IN THE STATE; OR

- B. PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH A NOTARIZED STATEMENT OF NONPARTIC-IPATION AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 9-1915 OF THIS TITLE, INDICATING THAT HE OR SHE DECLINES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THIS TITLE TO RESOLVE TITLE TO DISPUTED PARCELS, AND PROVIDE A COPY OF SUCH NOTARIZED STATEMENT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE TOWN.
- 3. WITH RESPECT TO A PARCEL OR CONSERVATION EASEMENT WHICH THE PERSON INTENDS TO PROVIDE AS A GIFT TO THE STATE OR THE TOWN, RESPECTIVELY, AS SPECIFIED IN PARAGRAPH A OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION, THE TOWN SHALL PROVIDE THE PERSON WITH AN ASSESSED VALUE OF THE PROPOSED CONVEYANCE, WITH A COPY TO THE DEPARTMENT, WITHIN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY DAYS OF THE TOWN'S RECEIPT OF A COPY OF THE NOTIFICATION CONCERNING SUCH GIFT.
- 4. WITHIN TWELVE MONTHS OF THE DATE OF THE LETTERS SENT BY THE DEPARTMENT PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION, ALL PERSONS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE TO RESOLVE TITLE TO DISPUTED PARCELS SHALL CONVEY TO THE STATE ANY LAND WHICH SUCH PERSONS EXPRESSED AN INTENT TO SO CONVEY PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH A OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION, AND CONVEY TO THE TOWN ANY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS WHICH SUCH PERSONS EXPRESSED AN INTENT TO SO CONVEY PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH A OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION, AND MAKE PAYMENT TO THE TOWN DUE PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FIVE OF THIS SECTION.
- PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROCESS SET FORTH IN THIS TITLE TO RESOLVE TITLE TO DISPUTED PARCELS SHALL PAY THE TOWN AN AMOUNT APPROXIMATES THE STATE'S ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS IN RESOLVING THE DISPUTED PARCELS SITUATED WITHIN TOWNSHIP FORTY. THE PAYMENT AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUAL DISPUTED PARCEL SHALL BE THE SUM OF: (A) A FLAT RATE OF TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS PER PARCEL; AND (B) AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE OF THE PARCEL, INCLUDING STRUCTURES AND IMPROVEMENTS SITUATED THEREON, AS DETERMINED BY THE TWO THOUSAND TWELVE TOWN ASSESS-MENT, LESS THE ASSESSED VALUE OF ANY PORTION OF SUCH PARCEL CONVEYED TO THE STATE IN FEE OR ANY CONSERVATION EASEMENT CONVEYED TO THE PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH A OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION, DIVIDED BY THE TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE OF ALL DISPUTED PARCELS, INCLUDING STRUCTURES IMPROVEMENTS SITUATED THEREON AS DETERMINED BY THE TWO THOUSAND TWELVE TOWN ASSESSMENT, MULTIPLIED BY TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. THE TOWN SHALL USE ALL SUCH PAYMENTS TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOREST PRESERVE PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION SIX OF THIS SECTION.
- 6. WITHIN EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF THE DATE OF THE LETTERS SENT BY THE DEPARTMENT PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL IDENTIFY LANDS FOR THE TOWN TO ACQUIRE FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOREST PRESERVE. SUBJECT TO LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL, SUCH LANDS SHALL PROVIDE A NET BENEFIT TO THE FOREST PRESERVE AS COMPARED TO THE DISPUTED PARCELS TO WHICH THE STATE IS ESTOPPED FROM ASSERTING A CLAIM PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION SEVEN OF THIS SECTION. THE TOWN SHALL USE ALL PAYMENTS ACQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FIVE OF THIS SECTION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF SUCH LANDS. SUCH LANDS SHALL BE CONVEYED FROM THE OWNER DIRECTLY TO THE STATE.
- 7. UPON LEGISLATIVE APPROVAL OF THE LANDS TO BE PROVIDED TO THE STATE PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION SIX OF THIS SECTION AND THE SUBSEQUENT COMPLETION OF SUCH CONVEYANCES TO THE STATE, AND EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH B OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION AND SECTION 9-1909 OF THIS TITLE, THE STATE SHALL BE ESTOPPED FROM ASSERTING ANY CLAIM OF

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1 TITLE TO THE DISPUTED PARCELS BASED UPON A. FACTS OR ACTIONS THAT 2 OCCURRED PRIOR TO THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS TITLE, AND B. DEEDS, TAX 3 SALES OR OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT PREDATE THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS TITLE. 4 S 9-1909. ATTORNEY GENERAL TO FILE SUIT.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS OF A PERSON'S FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF SECTION 9-1907 OF 7 THIS TITLE WITH RESPECT TO A PARTICULAR DISPUTED PARCEL, OR WITHIN TWEN-TY-FOUR MONTHS OF A PERSON'S FILING OF A NOTICE OF NONPARTICIPATION PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH B OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF SECTION 9-1907 OF 9 10 TITLE WITH RESPECT TO A PARTICULAR DISPUTED PARCEL, SHALL COMMENCE AN ACTION IN A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION PURSUANT TO THE REAL PROPER-11 TY ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS LAW TO DETERMINE TITLE TO SUCH PARCEL. 12 ING CONTAINED IN THIS TITLE SHALL BE APPLICABLE TO SUCH ACTION. FAILURE 13 14 BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO COMMENCE SUCH ACTION WITHIN SUCH TIME FRAME SHALL NOT SUBSEQUENTLY PREVENT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FROM COMMENCING SUCH 16 AN ACTION OR CREATE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST THE STATE'S CLAIM OF TITLE.

17 S 9-1911. CONVEYANCES TO THE STATE.

NOTHING IN THIS TITLE SHALL BE INTERPRETED AS AT ANY TIME PREVENTING 19 ANY PERSON CLAIMING A DISPUTED PARCEL FROM OFFERING TO CONVEY ANY SUCH 20 PARCEL OR INTEREST IN ANY SUCH PARCEL TO THE STATE, PROVIDED THE STATE 21 MAY, SOLELY IN ITS DISCRETION, DECIDE WHETHER TO ACCEPT ANY SUCH OFFER.

22 S 9-1913. ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY JURISDICTION.

NOTHING IN THIS TITLE SHALL BE INTERPRETED AS ALTERING OR AFFECTING THE REGULATORY JURISDICTION OF THE ADIRONDACK PARK AGENCY OVER ANY LAND LOCATED WITHIN TOWNSHIP FORTY.

26 S 9-1915. NOTICE OF NONPARTICIPATION FORMAT.

THE FORMAT FOR THE NOTARIZED NOTICE OF NONPARTICIPATION DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH B OF SUBDIVISION TWO OF SECTION 9-1907 OF THIS TITLE SHALL BE AS FOLLOWS:

30 NOTICE OF NONPARTICIPATION

- 31 TOWNSHIP FORTY, TOTTEN AND CROSSFIELD PURCHASE
- 32 TOWN OF LONG LAKE, COUNTY OF HAMILTON
- 33 NAME(S):
- 34 MAILING ADDRESS(ES):
- 35 TELEPHONE NUMBER(S):
- 36 DESCRIPTION OF TOWNSHIP FORTY DISPUTED PARCEL:
- 37 I (WE) ELECT TO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE SPECIAL PROCEEDING TO RESOLVE 38 TITLE ISSUES REGARDING THE ABOVE-REFERENCED PARCEL AS AUTHORIZED BY TITLE NINETEEN OF ARTICLE NINE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW. 39 40 (WE) UNDERSTAND THAT: WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR MONTHS OF MY (OUR) FILING OF THIS NOTICE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SHALL COMMENCE AN ACTION IN A COURT OF 41 COMPETENT JURISDICTION TO DETERMINE TITLE TO SUCH PARCEL; NOTHING 42 43 TITLE NINETEEN OF ARTICLE NINE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW SHALL BE APPLICABLE TO SUCH LITIGATION; AND FAILURE BY THE 44 45 GENERAL TO COMMENCE SUCH ACTION WITHIN SUCH TWENTY-FOUR MONTH TIME FRAME SHALL NOT SUBSEQUENTLY PREVENT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FROM COMMENCING SUCH 47 AN ACTION OR CREATE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST THE STATE'S CLAIM OF TITLE.
- 48 SIGNATURE
- 49 (NOTARIZATION)
- S 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same manner as a "CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY proposing an amendment to section 1 of article 14 of the constitution, in relation to disputed title in township 40, Totten and Crossfield Purchase, in the town of Long Lake, Hamilton county," takes effect in accordance with section 1 of article 19 of the constitution.