

ACT OF MARCH 1, 1911-(WEEKS LAW)

[(POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE WEEKS LAW)¹

[As Amended Through P.L. 110–343, Enacted October 3, 2008]

CHAP. 186.—An Act To enable any State to cooperate with any other State or States, or with the United States, for the protection of the watersheds of navigable streams, and to appoint a commission for the acquisition of lands for the purpose of conserving the navigability of navigable rivers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That [16 U.S.C. 552] the consent of the Congress of the United States is hereby given to each of the several States of the Union to enter into any agreement or compact, not in conflict with any law of the United States, with any other State or States for the purpose of conserving the forests and the water supply of the States entering into such agreement or compact.

SEC. 2. [16 U.S.C. 563] That the sum of two hundred thousand dollars is hereby appropriated and made available until expended, out of any moneys in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to enable the Secretary of Agriculture to cooperate with any State or group of States, when requested to do so, in the protection from fire of the forested watersheds of navigable streams; and the Secretary of Agriculture is hereby authorized, and on such conditions as he deems wise, to stipulate and agree with any State or group of States to cooperate in the organization and maintenance of a system of fire protection on any private or state forest lands within such State or States and situated upon the watershed of a navigable river: *Provided*, That no such stipulation or agreement shall be made with any State which has not provided by law for a system of forest-fire protection: *Provided further*, That in no case shall the amount expended in any State exceed in any fiscal year the amount appropriated by that State for the same purpose during the same fiscal year.

SEC. 3. That there is hereby appropriated, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and ten, the sum of one million dollars, and for each fiscal year thereafter a sum not to exceed two million dollars for use in the examination, survey, and of lands located on the headwaters of navigable streams or those which are being or which may be developed for navigable purposes: *Provided*, That the provisions of this section shall expire by limitation on the thirtieth day of June, nineteen hundred and fifteen.

[Sections 4 and 5—Repealed by P.L. 94–588]

¹This Act provides for the acquisition of national forest system lands in the Eastern United States.]

SEC. 6. [16 U.S.C. 515] The Secretary of Agriculture is hereby authorized and directed to examine, locate, and purchase such forested, cut-over, or denuded lands within the watersheds of navigable streams as in his judgment may be necessary to the regulation of the flow of navigable streams or for the production of timber. No deed or other instrument of conveyance of lands referred to herein shall be accepted or approved by the Secretary of Agriculture under this Act until the legislature of the State in which the land lies shall have consented to the acquisition of such land by the United States for the purpose of preserving the navigability of navigable streams.

SEC. 7. [16 U.S.C. 516] When the public interests will be benefited thereby, the Secretary of Agriculture is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to accept on behalf of the United States title to any lands within the exterior boundaries of national forests which, in his opinion, are chiefly valuable for the purposes of this Act, and in exchange therefor to convey by deed not to exceed an equal value of such national forest land in the same State, or he may authorize the grantor to cut and remove an equal value of timber within such national forests in the same State, the values in each case to be determined by him: *Provided*, That before any such exchange is effected notice of the contemplated exchange reciting the lands involved shall be published once each week for four successive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which may be situated the lands to be accepted, and in some like newspaper published in any county in which may be situated any lands or timber to be given in such exchange. Timber given in such exchanges shall be cut and removed under the laws and regulations relating to such national forests, and under the direction and supervision and in accordance with the requirements of the Secretary of Agriculture. Lands so accepted by the Secretary of Agriculture shall, upon acceptance, become parts of the national forests within whose exterior boundaries they are located, and be subjected to all provisions of this Act.

SEC. 8. [16 U.S.C. 517] That the Secretary of Agriculture may do all things necessary to secure the safe title in the United States to the lands to be acquired under this Act, but no payment shall be made for any such lands until the title shall be satisfactory to the Attorney-General and shall be vested in the United States: *Provided*, [16 U.S.C. 517a] That in condemnation proceedings, heretofore or hereafter prosecuted, for the acquisition of lands under this Act, in which a decree is entered vesting title thereto in the United States upon payment of the award into the registry of the court, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to make such payment when advised by the Attorney General or his designee that the proceedings and the decree are regular.

SEC. 9. [16 U.S.C. 518] That such acquisition by the United States shall in no case be defeated because of located or defined rights of way, easements, and reservations, which, from their nature will, in the opinion of the Secretary of Agriculture, in no manner interfere with the use of the lands so encumbered, for the purposes of the Act: *Provided*, That such rights of way, easements, and reservations retained by the owner from whom the United States receives title, shall be subject to the rules and regulations pre-

scribed by the Secretary of Agriculture for their occupation, use, operation, protection, and administration, and that such rules and regulations shall be expressed in and made part of the written instrument conveying title to the lands to the United States; and the use, occupation, and operation of such rights of way, easements, and reservations shall be under, subject to, and in obedience with the rules and regulations so expressed.

SEC. 10. [16 U.S.C. 519] That inasmuch as small areas of land chiefly valuable for agriculture may of necessity or by inadvertence be included in tracts acquired under this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may, in his discretion, and he is hereby authorized, upon application or otherwise, to examine and ascertain the location and extent of such areas as in his opinion may be occupied for agricultural purposes without injury to the forests or to stream flow and which are not needed for public purposes, and may list and describe the same by metes and bounds, or otherwise, and offer them for sale as homesteads at their true value, to be fixed by him, to actual settlers, in tracts not exceeding eighty acres in area, under such joint rules and regulations as the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior¹ may prescribe; and in case of such sale the jurisdiction over the lands sold shall, ipso facto, revert to the State in which the lands sold lie. And no right, title, interest, or claim in or to any lands acquired under this Act, or the waters thereon, or the products, resources, or use thereof after such lands shall have been so acquired, shall be initiated or perfected, except as in this section provided.

SEC. 11. [16 U.S.C. 521] That, subject to the provisions of the last preceding section, the lands acquired under this Act shall be permanently reserved, held, and administered as national forest lands under the provisions of section twenty-four of the Act approved March third, eighteen hundred and ninety-one (volume twenty-six, Statutes at Large, page eleven hundred and three), and Acts supplemental to and amendatory thereof. And the Secretary of Agriculture may from time to time divide the lands acquired under this Act into such specific national forests and so designate the same as he may deem best for administrative purposes.

SEC. 12. [16 U.S.C. 480] That the jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, over persons upon the lands acquired under this Act shall not be affected or changed by their permanent reservation and administration as national forest lands, except so far as the punishment of offenses against the United States is concerned, the intent and meaning of this section being that the State wherein such land is situated shall not, by reason of such reservation and administration, lose its jurisdiction nor the inhabitants thereof their rights and privileges as citizens or be absolved from their duties as citizens of the State.

SEC. 13. [16 U.S.C. 500] That an amount equal to the annual average of 25 percent of all amounts received for the applicable fiscal year and each of the preceding 6 fiscal years from each national forest shall be paid, at the end of such year, by the Secretary of the Treasury to the State in which such national forest is situated,

¹The functions of the Secretary of the Interior under section 10 of the Act of March 1, 1911 (36 Stat. 962; 16 U.S.C. 519), with respect to sales of small tracts of acquired national forest lands found chiefly valuable for agriculture. See section 1(k) of P.L. 88-509, 74 Stat. 205.

to be expended as the state legislature may prescribe for the benefit of the public schools and public roads of the county or counties in which such national forest is situated: *Provided*, That when any national forest is in more than one State or county the distributive share to each from the proceeds of such forest shall be proportional to its area therein. Beginning October 1, 1976, the term "moneys received" shall include all collections under the Act of June 9, 1930, and all amounts earned or allowed any purchaser of national forest timber and other forest products within such State as purchaser credits, for the construction of roads on the National Forest Transportation System within such national forests or parts thereof in connection with any Forest Service timber sales contract. The Secretary of Agriculture shall, from time to time as he goes through his process of developing the budget revenue estimates, make available to the States his current projections of revenues and payments estimated to be made under the Act of May 23, 1908, as amended, or any other special Acts making payments in lieu of taxes for their use for local budget planning purposes.