



2013 ASSEMBLY BILL 665

January 24, 2014 – Introduced by Representatives CRAIG, KESSLER, BERNIER, BORN, KNODL, LEMAHIEU and STROEBEL, cosponsored by Senators LAZICH, OLSEN and RISSER. Referred to Committee on Environment and Forestry.

1 **AN ACT to create** 23.0917 (8) (h) and 77.82 (1) (b) 4. of the statutes; **relating to:**
2 access to land acquired with stewardship funding and access to managed forest
3 land.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Current law authorizes the state to incur public debt for certain conservation activities under the Warren Knowles–Gaylord Nelson Stewardship 2000 Program (stewardship program), which is administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The state may incur this debt to provide funding to acquire land for the state for conservation purposes and may also use the funding to award grants or state aid to certain local governmental units and nonprofit conservation organizations to acquire lands for conservation purposes (stewardship funding). Current law requires that land acquired with stewardship funding be open to the public for nature–based outdoor activities, with certain exceptions.

This bill prohibits the expenditure of stewardship funding to acquire land that is required to be open to the public unless the land is accessible to the public on foot.

Under current law, under the managed forest land (MFL) program, the owner of land that meets certain requirements concerning size and the amount of timber on the land may apply to have DNR designate the land as MFL. The owner of such land is entitled to make an annual payment that is lower than, and in lieu of, the property taxes that normally would be payable on the land. In exchange, the owner must comply with certain forestry practices and may keep a specific area closed to public access; the remainder of the land must be kept open for recreational activities

