A bill for an act
relating to natural resources; establishing parks and trails legacy grant program; providing appointments; amending Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 85.53.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 85.53, is amended to read:

85.53 PARKS AND TRAILS FUND.

Subdivision 1. **Fund established.** The parks and trails fund is established in the Minnesota Constitution, article XI, section 15. All money earned by the parks and trails fund must be credited to the fund.

Subd. 2. **Parks and trails legacy grant program.** (a) The commissioner of natural resources shall establish a grant program according to this subdivision to assist eligible units of local government in acquiring, developing, improving, and restoring park and trail lands of regional or statewide significance. For purposes of this subdivision, "eligible units of local government" means any of the following located outside the metropolitan area, as defined under section 473.121, subdivision 2:

(1) counties, statutory or home rule charter cities, and towns;

(2) organizations formed for the joint exercise of powers under section 471.59; and

(3) other special purpose districts or authorities exercising authority in parks or trails related land resources management at the local level.

(b) Twenty-four percent of the money annually deposited in the parks and trails fund must be allocated for the grant program under this subdivision. Of this amount, one percent of the annual allocation, up to an accumulated total of $10,000,000, must be reserved for emergency acquisition of qualifying lands, as defined by the commissioner under paragraph (e). Grants awarded under this subdivision are supplemental to traditional sources of funding and must not supplant traditional sources of funding, including, but not limited to, funding from the environment and natural resources trust fund, general fund, bond fund, and federal land and water conservation fund.

(c) Use of grants under this subdivision must be for projects of a capital nature. Recipients of grants must provide a nonstate match of at least 25 percent of total eligible project costs. An eligible match may be cash or in-kind services. The commissioner shall make payment to a grant recipient upon receipt of documentation of reimbursable expenditures.

(d) The commissioner shall determine priorities for awarding grants based on the state comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. The commissioner shall convene an advisory task force to assist in establishing priorities. The advisory task force must include:

(1) five members appointed by the Association of Minnesota Counties, representing statewide geographic balance;

(2) three members appointed by the League of Minnesota Cities, representing statewide geographic balance;

(3) one member of the house of representatives Capital Investment Finance Division of the Finance Committee, appointed by the speaker of the house;

(4) one member of the senate Capital Investment Committee, appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Rules and Administration Committee; and

(5) one member appointed by the governor.

The task force members serve without compensation.

(e) The commissioner is exempt from the rulemaking process under chapter 14 for purposes of the grant program under this subdivision and section 14.386 does not apply to implementation of the grant program. The commissioner may:

(1) specify criteria for eligibility for grants under this subdivision;

(2) define qualifying lands for purposes of emergency acquisition; and

(3) administer the grant program under this subdivision.