

CHAPTER 290C

SUSTAINABLE FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
INCENTIVE PROGRAM

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290C.02 DEFINITIONS.

[For text of subds 1 and 2, see M.S.2002]

Subd. 3. **Claimant.** "Claimant" means a person, as that term is defined in section 290.01, subdivision 2, who owns forest land in Minnesota and files an application authorized by the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act. For purposes of section 290C.11, claimant also includes any person bound by the covenant required in section 290C.04. No more than one claimant is entitled to a payment under this chapter with respect to any tract, parcel, or piece of land enrolled under this chapter that has been assigned the same parcel identification number. When enrolled forest land is owned by two or more persons, the owners must determine between them which person may claim the payments provided under sections 290C.01 to 290C.11.

[For text of subds 4 to 6, see M.S.2002]

Subd. 7. **Forest management plan.** "Forest management plan" means a written document providing a framework for site-specific healthy, productive, and sustainable forest resources. A forest management plan must include at least the following: (i) owner-specific forest management goals for the land; (ii) a reliable field inventory of the individual forest cover types, their age, and density; (iii) a description of the soil type and quality; (iv) an aerial photo and/or map of the vegetation and other natural features of the land clearly indicating the boundaries of the land and of the forest land; (v) the proposed future conditions of the land; (vi) prescriptions to meet proposed future conditions of the land; (vii) a recommended timetable for implementing the prescribed activities; and (viii) a legal description of the land encompassing the parcels included in the plan. All management activities prescribed in a plan must be in accordance with the recommended timber harvesting and forest management guidelines. The commissioner of natural resources shall provide a framework for plan content and updating and revising plans.

[For text of subds 8 and 9, see M.S.2002]

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 35,36

290C.03 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Land may be enrolled in the sustainable forest incentive program under this chapter if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) the land consists of at least 20 contiguous acres and at least 50 percent of the land must meet the definition of forest land in section 88.01, subdivision 7, during the enrollment;

(2) a forest management plan for the land must be prepared by an approved plan writer and implemented during the period in which the land is enrolled;

(3) timber harvesting and forest management guidelines must be used in conjunction with any timber harvesting or forest management activities conducted on the land during the period in which the land is enrolled;

(4) the land must be enrolled for a minimum of eight years;

(5) there are no delinquent property taxes on the land; and

(6) claimants enrolling more than 1,920 acres in the sustainable forest incentive program must allow year-round, nonmotorized access to fish and wildlife resources on enrolled land except within one-fourth mile of a permanent dwelling or during periods of high fire hazard as determined by the commissioner of natural resources.

(b) Claimants required to allow access under paragraph (a), clause (6), do not by that action:

(1) extend any assurance that the land is safe for any purpose;

(2) confer upon the person the legal status of an invitee or licensee to whom a duty of care is owed; or

(3) assume responsibility for or incur liability for any injury to the person or property caused by an act or omission of the person.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 37

290C.07 CALCULATION OF INCENTIVE PAYMENT.

An approved claimant under the sustainable forest incentive program is eligible to receive an annual payment. The payment shall equal the greater of:

(1) the difference between the property tax that would be paid on the land using the previous year's statewide average total township tax rate and the class rate for class 2b timberland under section 273.13, subdivision 23, paragraph (b), if the land were valued at (i) the average statewide timberland market value per acre calculated under section 290C.06, and (ii) the average statewide timberland current use value per acre calculated under section 290C.02, subdivision 5;

(2) two-thirds of the property tax amount determined by using the previous year's statewide average total township tax rate, the estimated market value per acre as calculated in section 290C.06, and the class rate for 2b timberland under section 273.13, subdivision 23, paragraph (b); or

(3) \$1.50 per acre for each acre enrolled in the sustainable forest incentive program.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 38

290C.09 REMOVAL FOR PROPERTY TAX DELINQUENCY.

The commissioner shall immediately remove any land enrolled in the sustainable forest incentive program for which taxes are determined to be delinquent as provided in chapter 279 and shall notify the claimant of such action. Lands terminated from the sustainable forest incentive program under this section are not entitled to any payments provided in this chapter and are subject to removal penalties prescribed in section 290C.11. The claimant has 60 days from the receipt of notice from the commissioner under this section to pay the delinquent taxes. If the delinquent taxes are paid within this 60-day period, the lands shall be reinstated in the program as if they had not been withdrawn and without the payment of a penalty.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 39

290C.10 WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES.

An approved claimant under the sustainable forest incentive program for a minimum of four years may notify the commissioner of the intent to terminate enrollment. Within 90 days of receipt of notice to terminate enrollment, the commissioner shall inform the claimant in writing, acknowledging receipt of this notice and indicating the effective date of termination from the sustainable forest incentive program. Termination of enrollment in the sustainable forest incentive program occurs on January 1 of the fifth calendar year that begins after receipt by the commissioner of the termination notice. After the commissioner issues an effective date of termination, a claimant wishing to continue the land's enrollment in the sustainable forest incentive program beyond the termination date must apply for enrollment as prescribed in section 290C.04. A claimant who withdraws a parcel of land from this program may not reenroll the parcel for a period of three years. Within 90 days after the termination

date, the commissioner shall execute and acknowledge a document releasing the land from the covenant required under this chapter. The document must be mailed to the claimant and is entitled to be recorded. The commissioner may allow early withdrawal from the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act without penalty in cases of condemnation for a public purpose notwithstanding the provisions of this section.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 40

290C.11 PENALTIES FOR REMOVAL.

(a) If the commissioner determines that land enrolled in the sustainable forest incentive program is in violation of the conditions for enrollment as specified in section 290C.03, the commissioner shall notify the claimant of the intent to remove all enrolled land from the sustainable forest incentive program. The claimant has 60 days to appeal this determination. The appeal must be made in writing to the commissioner, who shall, within 60 days, notify the claimant as to the outcome of the appeal. Within 60 days after the commissioner denies an appeal, or within 120 days after the commissioner received a written appeal if the commissioner has not made a determination in that time, the owner may appeal to Tax Court under chapter 271 as if the appeal is from an order of the commissioner.

(b) If the commissioner determines the land is to be removed from the sustainable forest incentive program, the claimant is liable for payment to the commissioner in the amount equal to the payments received under this chapter for the previous four-year period, plus interest. The claimant has 90 days to satisfy the payment for removal of land from the sustainable forest incentive program under this section. If the penalty is not paid within the 90-day period under this paragraph, the commissioner shall certify the amount to the county auditor for collection as a part of the general ad valorem real property taxes on the land in the following taxes payable year.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 41

290C.12 DEATH OF CLAIMANT.

Within one year after the death of the claimant, the claimant's heir, devisee, or estate must either:

- (1) notify the commissioner of election to terminate enrollment in the sustainable forest incentive program; or
- (2) make an application under this chapter to continue enrollment of the land in the program.

Upon notification under clause (1), the commissioner shall terminate the enrollment and issue a document releasing the land from the covenant as provided in section 290C.04, paragraph (c). Penalties under section 290C.11 shall not apply. If the application under clause (2) is approved, the land is enrolled in the program without a break. If the commissioner does not receive notification within one year after the date of death, enrollment in the program shall be terminated and penalties under section 290C.11 shall not apply.

History: 2003 c 127 art 5 s 42

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 2003, chapter 127, article 5, section 42, is effective May 26, 2003, except in the case of claimants dying prior to May 26, 2003, heirs, devisees, or estates may make the election either six months after May 26, 2003, or one year after the death of the claimant, whichever is later. Laws 2003, chapter 127, article 5, section 42, the effective date.