

**STATE TRANSPORTATION PRESERVATION ACT OF 1976 (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 295 of 1976**

**474.60 Acquiring, leasing, or securing easement for use of real property owned by railroad; conveyance or lease to public or private entity; preservation of right-of-way for future use as railroad line; disposing of or leasing right-of-way; powers of department; restrictions to assure future rail use.**

Sec. 10. (1) In weighing the varied interests of the residents of this state, the department shall consider the individual interest of any person, public or private corporation, local or regional transportation authority, local governmental unit, private carrier, group of rail users, state agency, other public or private entity, including a port authority established under the Hertel-Law-T. Stopczynski port authority act, 1978 PA 639, MCL 120.101 to 120.130, or any combination of these entities, expressing a desire to acquire or lease or secure an easement for the use of a portion or all of the real property owned by a railroad company. The property acquired by the department under this act may be conveyed or leased to an entity or combination of entities listed in this subsection with appropriate reimbursement, as determined by the department.

(2) Upon acquisition of a right-of-way, the department may preserve the right-of-way for future use as a railroad line and, if preserving it for that use, shall not permit any action that would render it unsuitable for future rail use. If the department determines a right-of-way or other property acquired under this act is no longer necessary for railroad transportation purposes, the department may preserve and utilize the right-of-way for other transportation purposes or may dispose of the right-of-way or other property acquired under this act for the purposes described in section 6, or may dispose of or lease the right-of-way or other property for other purposes, as appropriate. The department shall not dispose of or lease a right-of-way without first offering to transfer the right-of-way to the department of natural resources. If the department of natural resources desires to lease or purchase the right-of-way, the department of natural resources must indicate its desire to lease or purchase the right-of-way within 60 days and accept the offered transfer within 1 year after the offer is made. If the department of natural resources does not indicate a desire to lease or purchase the right-of-way within 60 days, the department may dispose of or lease the right-of-way as otherwise provided for in this act. If the department of natural resources does not accept the offered transfer within 1 year after indicating its desire to lease or purchase the right-of-way, the department may dispose of or lease the right-of-way as otherwise provided for in this act. When appropriate, a right-of-way or other property shall be transferred or leased to a public or private entity with appropriate reimbursement, as determined by the department.

(3) In preserving a right-of-way for future rail use, the department may do 1 or more of the following:

(a) Develop the right-of-way for use as a commuter trail where the use is feasible and needed or lease the right-of-way to a county, city, village, or township expressing a desire to develop the right-of-way as a commuter trail. The lease shall be for an indefinite period of time and is cancelable by the department only if the right-of-way is needed for rail usage. The trails, unless leased to a county, city, village, or township, shall remain under the jurisdiction of the department.

(b) Transfer, for appropriate reimbursement, the right-of-way to the department of natural resources for use as a Michigan railway pursuant to part 721 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, 1994 PA 451, MCL 324.72101 to 324.72116, if the deed includes restrictions on the use of the property that assure that the property remains viable for future rail usage, and includes a clause that requires the department of natural resources to transfer, for appropriate reimbursement, the right-of-way to the department, upon a determination of the director of the department that the right-of-way is needed for use as a railroad line.

(c) Lease the right-of-way to the department of natural resources, or upon approval of the department of natural resources, to a county, city, village, or township for use as a recreational trail. The lease shall be for an indefinite period of time and is cancelable by the department only if the right-of-way is needed for rail usage. A recreational trail shall be reserved for non-motorized forms of recreation or snowmobiling only. Snowmobiling shall not be allowed on more than 50% of the mileage of the recreational trails established pursuant to this act.

(d) In cases where a trail serves both a significant commuter and recreation function, authorize the joint development of the trail by the department and the department of natural resources, or the department and any interested county, city, village, or township. Administration of the trail shall be determined jointly by the department and the department of natural resources.

(4) As a term of conveyance, the department may require restrictions on the use of the property that assure that the property remains viable for future rail use and that the rail line is made available by the purchaser for future freight or passenger rail uses and that the property will revert to the department if the purchaser fails to maintain the property so that it remains viable for future rail use.

**History:** 1976, Act 295, Eff. Nov. 15, 1976;—Am. 1984, Act 210, Imd. Eff. July 9, 1984;—Am. 1993, Act 28, Imd. Eff. Apr. 21, 1993;—Am. 1998, Act 235, Imd. Eff. July 3, 1998;—Am. 2008, Act 570, Imd. Eff. Jan. 16, 2009;—Am. 2011, Act 29, Imd. Eff. May 17, 2011;—Am. 2012, Act 42, Imd. Eff. Mar. 6, 2012;—Am. 2014, Act 25, Imd. Eff. Mar. 4, 2014.