

State Property Database Improvement

Background

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCN) State Lands Division Land Resource Information Center (LRIC) currently oversees the "State-Owned Land Registry," a database which includes information on 6,560 state-owned real properties.¹ The responsibility for data submission falls on each agency and no penalties currently exist for agencies or the DCN for failure to keep accurate records.² Additionally, the State Lands Division manages lands owned by state institutions to harvest timber, minerals, and other natural resources in order to gain revenue for both their office and the state institution which owns the land and natural resources.³

Many entries in the current LRIC database are incomplete and offer insight into the inadequacies of the current property management system.⁴ Below is a sampling:

- Of the 6,560 in the database, 1,957 properties are listed with no "Use Type" and 1,597 properties listed have no "Facility Name" with descriptions that offer little information about the actual use of the property.
- Alabama Department of Natural Resources owns "Baywatch Marina, Sunset Grill," "Safe Harbor RV Resort Property," "State Cattle Ranch," "Big S Oil Co," "Buck's," "Captains Table and Motel [sic]," "Mack's Bait and Tackle," "Mobala Realty," "Zeno's Bait Shop," "Delchamps," "Blind Man," and "Governor's Beach Mansion."
- Finance Department owns "Winn Dixie-Prattville" and "Unnamed Abandon [sic] Building."
- Forestry Commission has 18 facilities listed as "Title Problem – Sold?"

ISSUE SNAPSHOT

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCN) currently oversees a database of 6,560 entries which contains incomplete information on some State-owned real property.

There are 1,957 properties listed with no "Use Type" and the State owns "Mack's Bait and Tackle," "Unnamed Abandon Building [sic]," and "Winn Dixie-Prattville."

The State must create an incentive to report accurate and complete information for departments and other entities withholding required information.

The Department of Examiners of Public Accounts maintains a similar and more complete list of state leases from private entities, but it does not include properties leased from one agency to another. However, this document includes a variety of useful information such as the number of leases by each agency, the annual cost of leases, and square footage of individual properties.⁵

Policy Consideration

The DCN lacks the means to effectively manage the State property list. Without the authority to require each state entity to submit complete and accurate information, obtaining comprehensive data remains a significant challenge.

The State may be underutilizing many of its property holdings. Without access to accurate and complete information, Alabama's state government lacks the

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knowledge to make sound property decisions for the State.

During the 2013 regular legislative session, Representative Paul DeMarco introduced House Bill 82 (HB82) which makes improvements to the existing owned and leased property database.⁶ HB82 “require[s] the [State Department of Finance] to develop and maintain an automated inventory of all facilities and lands owned, leased, rented, or otherwise occupied or maintained by any [state entity].”⁷ This bill passed the House, but not the Senate.⁸ By first creating a comprehensive database, the State will be able to perform a holistic analysis of the State’s current land and space and make better decisions regarding property management.

Recommendation

Alabama must gather comprehensive information on property owned and leased by the State. To encourage compliance, agencies failing to provide information as required should be ineligible to receive funds for purchasing property and capital improvements.

¹ LAND RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER, ALA. DEPT. OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, <http://www.outdooralabama.com/public-lands/stateLands/LRIC.cfm> (last visited Oct. 22, 2013).

² ALA. CODE. §9-2-121 available at <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/CodeOfAlabama/1975/9-2-121.htm>.

³ STATE LANDS, ALA. DEPT. OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, <http://www.outdooralabama.com/public-lands/stateLands/> (last visited Oct. 22, 2013).

⁴ LRIC – 6-17-2013, LAND RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER, ALA. DEPT. OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, on file with author (2013).

⁵ Ronald L. Jones, *Real Property Leased from Private Entities as of October 1, 2012*, ALA. DEPT. OF EXAMINERS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS, <http://www.examiners.alabama.gov/ReportSearch.aspx> (in the section “Entity:” type “Real Property Leased from Private Entities, as of October 1, 2012,” follow hyperlink “Search.” On the page that appears, follow the hyperlink “View.” A download of a .pdf titled “13X-0001-Lease Report” should begin).

⁶ See generally H.B. 82, 2013 Regular Session, (Ala. 2013) available at <http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/ACTIONViewFrameMac.asp?TYPE=Instrument&INST=HB82&DOCPATH=searchableinstruments/2013RS/Printfiles/&PHYDOCPATH=//alisondb/acas/searchableinstruments/2013RS/PrintFiles/&DOCNAME=HB82-int.pdf.HB82-eng.pdf>.

⁷ *Id.* at 1.

⁸ *Id.* at 4.