

## **Notes for H.584 Testimony to House Natural Resources**

*Friday, January 29, 2016 10:30am*

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1. Brief background of grant/donation/gift review process
2. Grant data
  - a. Approx. 65 grants per year through JFO (last 5 yrs.)
  - b. Over last 5 years no grants denied by JFC (324 grants) per JFO website
    - i. One held for legislative review with outcome not listed on website  
(did not research further)
    - ii. Other grants held for review at JFC meetings or by Legislature; all  
either ultimately approved by JFC or passed in a bill
  - c. Over last 5 years only 5 grants made to Dept. of Forests, Parks and Rec.
    - i. All approved by JFC within 30 day statutory window
    - ii. Donors include VLT, Nature Conservancy, Lintilhac Foundation,  
USDA, and Federal Forest Legacy Funding
    - iii. One grant was limited service position only which does not need  
Governor approval
  - d. Survey of past 50 grants
    - i. Average time between grant award and approval by AoA = 66  
days
    - ii. Average time between AoA and JFC approval = 38 days (includes  
30 day statutory window for JFC review)
    - iii. Two grants took 31 days because they were held for approval at  
JFC meeting

### 3. Thoughts of Money Chairs

- a. Spoke first with Sen. Kitchel who subsequently spoke with Sen. Ashe, Rep. Johnson and Rep. Ancel
- b. All expressed concern that passing this provision might set a precedent for others to ask for exemptions from grant review process in the future
- c. Felt that Commissioner's argument that there is unnecessary duplication to grant review was unfounded
  - i. Executive and Legislative review of budget, fee bill, all other executive branch bill requests
  - ii. Budgets begin in departments/agencies and move to 5th floor and then on to Legislature (just like grants)
- d. Sen. Kitchel noted that acceptance might create additional workload and cost the Department to adequately manage the land. Additionally, she said that there might be conditions on the donation that should be reviewed and approved before acceptance – not subject to complain after the fact.
  - i. She mentioned a land donation in Morrisville where during the JFC review process another person came forward claiming ownership of the land.
- e. Many grants are made to the State each year from private and institutional donors regardless of the timing of the grant review process. The ultimate value of exempting State parks grants from executive and legislative oversight raises questions.