

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners  
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners      Date: 5/20/14  
Via: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator  
From: Land Department  
Title of Item: Letter regarding endangered species listing - Northern Long-Eared Bat  
Requested Meeting Date: 5/27/14      Estimated Presentation Time: 15 minutes  
Presenter: Mark Jacobs

**Type of Action Requested** (check all that apply)

- For info only, no action requested       Approve under Consent Agenda
- For discussion only with possible future action       Adopt Ordinance Revision
- Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison)
- Approve/adopt proposal by motion       Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution)
- Authorize filling vacant staff position
- Request to schedule public hearing or sale       Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_
- Request by member of the public to be heard
- Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute \_\_\_\_\_

**Fiscal Impact** (check all that apply)

- Is this item in the current approved budget?  Yes  No (attach explanation)
- What type of expenditure is this?  Operating  Capital  Other (attach explanation)
- Revenue line account # that funds this item is: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expenditure line account # for this item is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Staffing Impact** (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

- Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected.  Yes  No
- Applicable job description(s) may require revision.  Yes  No
- Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy.  Yes  No
- Item may change the department's authorized staffing level.  Yes  No



**Supporting Attachment(s)**

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) **draft letter**

**Provide eleven (11) copies of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at 12:00 pm to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for mailing in the Board packets. (see reverse side for details)**

## Sue Bingham

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**From:** Mark Jacobs [mjacobs@co.aitkin.mn.us]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2014 11:58 AM  
**To:** 'Sue Bingham'; 'Roxy Traxler'  
**Subject:** 5/27 agenda item  
**Attachments:** NLEB CB.docx

I will have a brief report at the meeting with bulleted "talking point" handouts so the press has the info in-hand. MJ

**Mark Jacobs**  
**Land Commissioner**  
**Aitkin County Land Department**  
**209 2nd St NW Room # 206**  
**Aitkin, MN 56431**

Mr. Tom Melius  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5600 American Blvd. West, Suite 990  
Bloomington, MN 55437-1458

May XX, 2014

Dear Mr. Melius,

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners would like to express our concerns regarding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed listing of the Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) on the federal endangered species list. We understand that the proposed listing is due primarily to devastating population declines from white nose syndrome (WNS) in eastern states.

While Aitkin County recognizes the rationale for the NLEB listing, we are concerned that potential seasonal forest management restrictions resulting from the listing will have detrimental impacts to our local forest industry and forest dependent communities; and that these impacts will outweigh the potential benefits to the NLEB. We believe that due to our vast and diverse forests and our history of responsible forest management, a habitat management approach is a better means to maintain viable populations of forest dependant bats in our region than attempting to protect individuals.

Aitkin County manages over 221,000-acres of forestland in northern MN which provides diverse habitat for NLEB. Our annual timber harvest rate is 1.8% of our forestland; with less than 1/3 of that harvest occurring during the critical summer months. Therefore the risk of bat mortality resulting from timber harvesting is quite small. Our forestry practices retain structural elements (e.g. snags, cavity trees, riparian buffers) that are important habitat characteristics for NLEB. Our forestland has been third-party certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (since 1997) to independently verify sustainable harvest levels and ecologically-based forestry practices utilized to sustain forests and forest habitat.

Responsible forest management has not been shown to adversely impact forest dwelling bats, including NLEB. Aitkin County views forest bats as a beneficial species and we are committed to continuing forestry practices that enhance their habitat and maintain their populations in our County. We strongly recommend that the emphasis of NLEB protection should be on stopping the spread of WNS, not attempting to protect individual bats across millions of acres of forest in our region through unnecessary regulation.

JMW - Chair Aitkin County Board of Commissioners