A bill to be entitled
An act relating to relating to state lands; amending
s. 253.42, F.S.; authorizing individuals and
corporations to submit requests to the Board of
Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to
exchange state-owned land for conservation easements
over privately held land; providing criteria for
consideration of such requests; encouraging certain
operations on such lands; providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, the Legislature finds that significant economic
forces compel the state to be innovative in seeking new ways to
expand the protection and conservation of undeveloped lands
while reducing the overall fiscal impact to the state, and

WHEREAS, many of these undeveloped lands are held in
private ownership by individuals or by private or public
corporations and are contiguous to existing state-owned land,
and

WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes that these individuals
or corporations may have additional management resources that
would assist in the conservation and protection of natural
resources on such lands and allow the state to increase the
amount of land under protective covenants, and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Legislature to encourage
the use of conservation easements over privately held land
through the exchange of state-owned land, to secure the future
of natural resource-based recreation areas, and to ensure the
survival of plant and animal species and the conservation of
finite and renewable natural resources, NOW, THEREFORE,

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

   Section 1. Subsection (4) is added to section 253.42, Florida Statutes, to read:

   253.42  Board of trustees may exchange lands.—The provisions of this section apply to all lands owned by, vested in, or titled in the name of the board whether the lands were acquired by the state as a purchase, or through gift, donation, or any other conveyance for which no consideration was paid.

   (4)(a)  An individual or a private or public corporation with privately held land contiguous to state-owned land may submit a request directly to the board to exchange state-owned land for conservation easements over the privately held land.

   (b)  If the privately held land is surrounded by state-owned land on at least 30 percent of its perimeter, and the exchange does not create an inholding, the board shall consider such request within 60 days after receipt of the request.

   (c)  Special consideration shall be given to a request submitted pursuant to this subsection that allows the state to retain a conservation easement in perpetuity. Furthermore, low-impact operations such as grazing, forest management, prescribed burning, and wildlife management practices are strongly encouraged on such lands.

   Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2013.