



SJ0060

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1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois seeks to support development
3 that enhances public safety, agriculture, and industry and
4 promotes economic and environmental security for communities
5 across Illinois; and

6 WHEREAS, Protecting and restoring floodplains helps reduce
7 flooding and avoids damages in flood-prone areas; it provides
8 improved habitat for fish and wildlife, improved water quality,
9 groundwater recharge, and opportunities for tourism and
10 recreation; it also provides more room for rivers during flood
11 events, reducing pressure on structures like dams and levees;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, Floods are the most common natural disaster in the
14 State and caused \$3 billion in property damage to Illinois
15 residents between 2000 and 2018; and

16 WHEREAS, Scientific evidence demonstrates that floods are
17 happening more frequently, and our current definitions of flood
18 frequencies underestimate the recurrence of flood events; and

19 WHEREAS, Levees are built with the intention of protecting
20 against recurring flood damage; although the State has
21 regulations to ensure levees are designed and built as to not

1 exacerbate the potential for flooding, they can contribute to
2 real and residual flood risks; and

3 WHEREAS, Levees, floodwalls, and other types of flood
4 control infrastructure are expensive to build and maintain, and
5 lack of adequate maintenance of flood control structures can
6 put people and property at risk; and

7 WHEREAS, Non-structural and nature-based flood risk
8 management options, such as floodplain restoration, can
9 provide more cost-effective long-term solutions for at-risk
10 communities; and

11 WHEREAS, Poor and marginalized communities are frequently
12 concentrated in flood-prone neighborhoods or areas of high real
13 or residual flood risk due to historic and/or ongoing
14 discriminatory housing policies; and

15 WHEREAS, Illinois floodplain development regulations
16 protect public safety and should be maintained; and

17 WHEREAS, Restoration programs that correct past
18 development actions lack adequate funding to correct the
19 ongoing floodplain degradation; and

20 WHEREAS, Mitigation and practices that reconnect rivers to

1 their floodplains do not restore the ecosystem functions, and
2 the sites are frequently paved or turfed; and

3 WHEREAS, The ecosystem restoration programs in Illinois
4 rarely reconnect rivers to their floodplains and often require
5 the maintenance of levees to prohibit floods from damaging
6 restoration project investments; and

7 WHEREAS, State agencies should consider how to integrate
8 floodplain activities to promote projects and development that
9 achieve co-equal benefits of flood risk reduction and ecosystem
10 restoration; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
12 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
13 CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Department of Natural Resources
14 shall maintain existing regulations in Part 3700 of Title 17 of
15 the Illinois Administrative Code that preserve the
16 Department's authority to regulate levees to protective
17 standards; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Department of Natural Resources is
19 directed to:

20 (1) Conduct a comprehensive review of floodplains and
21 determine meaningful trends in how floodplain use
22 impacts public safety, marginalized and poor

1 communities, farm economics, fish and wildlife
2 populations, natural resources, and water quality: in
3 conducting this review, the Department of Natural
4 Resources should consult with the following:

5 (a) the Illinois Emergency Management Agency;

6 (b) the Department of Agriculture;

7 (c) the Association of State Floodplain Managers;

8 (d) Environmental and conservation organizations;

9 (e) City managers and mayors;

10 (f) Organizations that represent minority
11 populations;

12 (g) Levee managers;

13 (h) the Illinois Farm Bureau; and

14 (i) Agricultural associations; and

15 (2) Make recommendations to the General Assembly as to
16 how Illinois can better integrate floodplain programs
17 to promote development and restoration activities that
18 protect public safety, especially for our most
19 vulnerable citizens, enhance the quality of the
20 natural environment of Illinois, and support
21 flood-compatible economies; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
23 delivered to the General Assembly and the Director of the
24 Department of Natural Resources.