



HR1127

LRB095 20645 HLH 48857 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois' Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are units of local government authorized by Illinois State statute; and

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WHEREAS, Each of Illinois' 98 SWCDs was duly created by local referendum; and

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WHEREAS, SWCDs were not given taxing authority but were intended to be funded by appropriations made by the Illinois General Assembly; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois' 98 SWCDs, and their approximately 250 employees, represent our State's frontline in protecting our rivers, streams, and other water sources against contamination from urban stormwater and agricultural chemicals and sediment; and

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WHEREAS, SWCDs provide and assist in delivering programs that prevent erosion from urban development and tillable soil that threatens our agricultural economy and the sustainability of our surface water supplies; and

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WHEREAS, The investment of State funds in the operational expenses of SWCDs ensures the distribution to Illinois of about

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1 \$250 million from the federal farm bill and other sources; and

2 WHEREAS, SWCDs provide an invaluable service by
3 coordinating assistance from all available sources, public,
4 private, local, State, and federal, in an effort to develop
5 locally driven solutions to natural resource concerns; and

6 WHEREAS, SWCDs provide services that benefit all citizens
7 of Illinois and the Illinois economy by implementing
8 conservation practices and measures that keep soil on fields,
9 lawns, and development sites and out of water bodies; and

10 WHEREAS, SWCDs assist developers and homeowners in
11 managing land in an environmentally sensitive manner; and

12 WHEREAS, SWCDs assist counties, municipalities, watershed
13 groups, organizations, State agencies, federal agencies,
14 corporations, and individuals with planning, installation, and
15 implementation of plans and practices that benefit society and
16 protect fragile and valuable natural resources; and

17 WHEREAS, SWCDs are dependent upon State appropriations for
18 operational grants and project funds to run their offices; and

19 WHEREAS, Operational grants to SWCDs are spent almost
20 exclusively on salaries because the districts save on rent and

1 other expenses by sharing offices with the United States
2 Department of Agriculture (USDA) in all but 5 counties; and

3 WHEREAS, The Fiscal Year 2008 budget appropriated
4 approximately \$7.4 million for SWCD operational expenses and
5 \$6.0 million for the Partners for Conservation Program
6 (formerly Conservation 2000) through the Department of
7 Agriculture; and

8 WHEREAS, As of April 1, 2008, only \$1.7 million of the \$7.4
9 million appropriation has been released to SWCDs for
10 operational expenses; the release of these funds breaks down to
11 each SWCD having received approximately \$14,000; and

12 WHEREAS, None of the \$6.0 million appropriated for the
13 Conservation Practices Program under the Partners for
14 Conservation Program has been released; and

15 WHEREAS, SWCDs cannot retain staff or maintain an office
16 without funds that are appropriated by the Illinois General
17 Assembly and approved by the Governor of the State of Illinois;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Many districts will have to consider laying-off
20 staff or closing their doors if additional funding is not
21 released; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
3 urge the Governor to immediately release the remaining \$5.75
4 million that was appropriated for grants to SWCDs for clerical
5 and other personnel expenses in addition to the \$6.0 million
6 appropriated for the Conservation Practices Program under the
7 Partners for Conservation Program to implement agricultural
8 resource enhancement programs for Illinois' natural resources,
9 including operational expenses; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
11 presented to the Governor and the Director of Agriculture.