



HR1281

LRB095 21025 RLJ 50175 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois ranks in the bottom third of states in the U.S. in the acquisition of land for parks, recreation and habitat; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois ranks last by a wide margin among Midwestern states in acres protected per capita with only one percent of protected state-owned recreation land; and

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WHEREAS, Land prices continue to rise and development pressures mount making the need for protecting open space more acute; and

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WHEREAS, The quantity of water supplied by aquifers, inland streams, and Lake Michigan is limited and land conservation provides water recharge and stream buffering providing for the protection of drinking water resources; and

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WHEREAS, Outdoor recreation contributes to a healthy lifestyle for the State's youth and adults alike, and young people need more access to safe, rewarding outdoor experiences to combat the growing epidemic of childhood obesity; and

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WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has called for the creation of more parks and playgrounds to

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1 counteract childhood obesity; and

2 WHEREAS, Parks and natural areas contribute to increased  
3 property values of neighboring properties; and

4 WHEREAS, Native Illinois wildlife populations have  
5 declined precipitously, and currently Illinois has 424 State  
6 and 24 federally listed threatened and endangered species; and

7 WHEREAS, Natural habitats have been shown to improve air  
8 quality; and

9 WHEREAS, Illinois has lost more than 90% of its original  
10 wetlands and 99% of its original open prairie and it is critical  
11 to take steps now to protect the remaining acreage; and

12 WHEREAS, The Illinois State Wildlife Action Plan has won  
13 national recognition but remains underfunded; and

14 WHEREAS, Illinois parks and natural areas generate 42,000  
15 jobs and create recreational opportunities for all Illinois  
16 citizens; and

17 WHEREAS, Hunting, fishing, and wildlife associated  
18 recreation currently generates nearly \$4,200,000,000 in  
19 economic activity in Illinois; and

1           WHEREAS, Voters have given overwhelming support to local  
2 referenda for land acquisition and public opinion polls show  
3 92% of the public registering support for the State preserving  
4 open space and wildlife habitat; and

5           WHEREAS, According to the most recent Statewide  
6 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2008, more than  
7 \$3,000,000,000 in State and local funding is necessary to,  
8 protect an additional 85,000 acres across the State, for  
9 renovation and restoration projects in existing parks and for  
10 new public recreation facilities; and

11           WHEREAS, Land acquisition is a capital intensive  
12 investment; therefore, be it

13           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
14 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
15 recognize that current funding for open space is severely  
16 lacking; that capital budgets have traditionally provided  
17 resources for land acquisition, stewardship, and public  
18 recreational opportunities; that the value of parks and natural  
19 areas in protecting Illinois from flooding, improving water  
20 quality, generating economic activity, and improving public  
21 health is without question; and be it further

1           Resolved, That we urge the Governor to present a capital  
2 budget that includes \$100,000,000 on an annual basis for the  
3 Illinois Special Places Acquisition, Conservation and  
4 Enhancement (iSPACE) Program, which includes the following:

5           (1) a new statewide land acquisition program to protect  
6 the State's most precious natural resources and provide  
7 recreational opportunities, including matching grants to  
8 local governments;

9           (2) implementation of the Partners for Conservation  
10 Program (formerly Conservation 2000) through land  
11 acquisition and management grants; and

12           (3) implementation of the Hunting Heritage Protection  
13 Act by increasing the amount of land acreage available for  
14 hunting opportunities in Illinois; and be it further

15           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution, be  
16 presented to the Speaker of the House of Representative, the  
17 Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President  
18 of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Director  
19 of Natural Resources, and the Governor.