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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The General Assembly declares that, in order to conserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, conserve wildlife and forests, protect the tax base and public lands, and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this State, it is in the public interest to provide for the conservation of the State's soil, soil resources, water, and water resources in order to control and prevent soil erosion, prevent air and water pollution, and prevent soil erosion and floodwater and sediment damages; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been caring for the State's precious natural and environmental resources since 1938; and

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WHEREAS, Soil and Water Conservation Districts have no authority to generate operating revenue through taxation but must rely on the Illinois General Assembly for their operational funds; and

WHEREAS, Funding levels have steadily fallen over the past several years to the level that many Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been forced to reduce employee

1 hours, delay filling vacant positions, lay off employees, and  
2 significantly reduce natural resource and environmental  
3 protection services to Illinois citizens; therefore, be it

4       RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL  
5 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
6 CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Illinois General Assembly shall  
7 convene a Joint Task Force on Soil and Water Conservation  
8 Districts, which shall study the history and purpose of Soil  
9 and Water Conservation Districts, the administration and  
10 organization of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the  
11 current and future funding of Soil and Water Conservation  
12 Districts, and any other topic regarding Soil and Water  
13 Conservation Districts that the Chair of the Task Force sees  
14 fit to study; and be it further

15       RESOLVED, That the members of the Joint Task Force shall  
16 include: one member appointed by the President of the Senate;  
17 one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; one  
18 member appointed by the Speaker of the House; one member  
19 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House; the Director of  
20 Agriculture or his or her designee, who shall serve as the  
21 Chairperson; the Director of the Environmental Protection  
22 Agency or his or her designee; and the Director of Natural  
23 Resources or his or her designee; additionally, the Director of  
24 Agriculture shall appoint the following Task Force Members: one

1 Soil and Water Conservation District Association member; two  
2 directors of local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, one  
3 located in an urban area, one located in a rural area; two Soil  
4 and Water Conservation District employees, one located in an  
5 urban area, one located in a rural area; one member  
6 representing a statewide association of land improvement  
7 contractors; two members representing two separate  
8 associations of commodity producers; two members of two  
9 separate statewide organizations representing farmers; and two  
10 members representing two separate statewide environmental  
11 organizations; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be facilitated by the  
13 Department of Agriculture; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the members of the Task Force shall serve  
15 without compensation; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Joint Task Force shall report its  
17 findings and legislative recommendations to the Governor and  
18 the General Assembly by January 1, 2011; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be delivered to  
20 the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Natural Resources,  
21 and the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency.