

1 AN ACT concerning conservation.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Public  
5 Waters Access Task Force Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds the  
7 following:

8 (1) Illinois' rivers provide significant ecological,  
9 recreational, and economic benefits.

10 (2) Access to rivers for boating, paddling, angling,  
11 and other outdoor recreation is essential to supporting  
12 tourism and public enjoyment of natural resources.

13 (3) Many communities across the State face barriers to  
14 safe, legal, and adequate river access.

15 (4) A coordinated, statewide evaluation is necessary  
16 to identify opportunities to expand and improve river  
17 access while balancing conservation, landowner interests,  
18 and public safety.

19 (5) A significant number of waterways in Illinois are  
20 privately owned and riparian rights must be protected and  
21 respected.

22 Section 10. Public Waters Access Task Force; creation.

1           (a) The Public Waters Access Task Force is created to  
2 study and make recommendations for increasing and improving  
3 public access to rivers for boaters, paddlers, and anglers  
4 throughout the State.

5           (b) The Task Force shall consist of the following members:

6           (1) one member appointed by the President of the  
7 Senate;

8           (2) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
9 Senate;

10          (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the House  
11 of Representatives;

12          (4) one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the  
13 House of Representatives;

14          (5) eight members appointed by the Director of Natural  
15 Resources, as follows:

16           (A) three members from organizations representing  
17 outdoor recreation interests;

18           (B) one member from a statewide organization  
19 representing cattle farmers in Illinois;

20           (C) one member who is a landowner in Illinois  
21 whose property includes a river;

22           (D) one member from a statewide organization  
23 representing real estate brokers;

24           (E) one member from the State's largest general  
25 agriculture association; and

26           (F) one member from an association that represents

1 attorneys statewide; and

2 (6) one member from the Department of Natural  
3 Resources designated by the Director of Natural Resources.

4 (c) The Task Force shall be co-chaired by:

5 (1) the member appointed under paragraph (6) of  
6 subsection (b); and

7 (2) one of the members appointed under paragraph (5)  
8 of subsection (b), selected by a majority vote of the  
9 members appointed under paragraph (5) of subsection (b).

10 Section 15. Duties of the Task Force. The Task Force  
11 shall:

12 (1) evaluate current public access to rivers across  
13 Illinois, including boat launches, public rights-of-way,  
14 private ownership, easements, and informal access points;

15 (2) identify barriers to river access, including  
16 regulatory, physical, financial, and land-use challenges;

17 (3) consult with local governments, conservation  
18 groups, landowners, recreational users, and other  
19 stakeholders;

20 (4) review best practices from other states for  
21 expanding river access while protecting natural resources  
22 and respecting private property rights; and

23 (5) develop recommendations to increase and improve  
24 river access, including potential legislative, regulatory,  
25 and funding strategies.

1           Section 20. Support. The Department of Natural Resources  
2 shall provide administrative, technical, and logistical  
3 support to the Task Force.

4           Section 25. Report; repeal.

5           (a) The Task Force shall submit a final report containing  
6 its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the  
7 General Assembly no later than one year after the effective  
8 date of this Act.

9           (b) Upon submission of the final report, the Task Force is  
10 dissolved.

11           (c) This Act is repealed 2 years after the effective date  
12 of this Act.

13           Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
14 becoming law.