



SR1008

LRB101 20598 LAW 70296 r

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Illinois Constitution declares that it is the public policy of the State "to provide and maintain a healthful environment for the benefit of this and future generations"; and

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WHEREAS, Illinois has historically demonstrated leadership and resolve to protect, conserve, and restore the natural environment, including through a network of protected areas; and

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WHEREAS, There are over 130 state parks and multiple conservation programs in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, According to an estimate by the United States Department of Agriculture, there were approximately five million acres of forested land in Illinois in 2018, containing over two billion trees; that is an increase of over 100,000 acres of wooded land since 2013; of those five million acres, over 83% of them were owned by private land-owners; and

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WHEREAS, The United States ranks among the top five countries in the world for the amount of wilderness-quality land and ocean it has remaining; and

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1 WHEREAS, The United States Geological Survey classifies
2 over seven-hundred million acres of land, or 30% of the U.S.
3 landmass, as protected; that network of protected areas is
4 preserved and supported by a variety of conservation laws; and

5 WHEREAS, The United States has the conservation experience
6 and traditions necessary to make great strides in the
7 preservation of natural areas for future generations; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States announced that it would join the
9 Trillion Trees Initiative, a global campaign to plant at least
10 one trillion new trees; and

11 WHEREAS, The U.S. Senate is considering a resolution
12 calling for the establishment of a national goal of conserving
13 at least 30% of U.S. lands and oceans by 2030; and

14 WHEREAS, Congressional leaders of both major parties have
15 implemented legislation to protect the United States' rich
16 natural heritage; and

17 WHEREAS, Despite these accomplishments, there are over
18 1,300 threatened or endangered species in the United States
19 according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency; a
20 study published in the journal Science found that the bird
21 populations in the United States and Canada have declined by

1 three billion since 1970; and

2 WHEREAS, Young people are taking the lead in the effort to
3 conserve Illinois' environmental resources; the students of
4 Pontiac Township High School raised \$100,000 and launched
5 Operation Endangered Species to restore endangered species to
6 their historical habitats; and

7 WHEREAS, Through the Operation Endangered Species program,
8 these students have performed research, secured habitat,
9 informed citizens, and empowered youth to take action; and

10 WHEREAS, Operation Endangered Species fostered cooperation
11 between the students of Pontiac Township High School and the
12 Illinois Department of Natural Resources, resulting in the
13 reintroduction of the Alligator Snapping Turtle back into its
14 natural habitat; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL
16 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the State should
17 redouble its efforts to work with the federal government, local
18 governments, the private sector, civil society, schools,
19 students, farmers, ranchers, fishing communities, and
20 sportsmen to conserve the land, rivers, and lakes of Illinois
21 for present and future generations to enjoy, taking into
22 account a wide range of flexible and enduring conservation

1 solutions that will improve access to nature for all people
2 within Illinois, especially for communities that that have
3 historically lacked access to natural spaces; and be it further

4 RESOLVED, That the State should pursue this goal in a way
5 that protects private property rights and traditional land uses
6 and enables landowners to pass down the working land of those
7 landowners to the next generation; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be delivered to
9 the students of Pontiac Township High School, Lemont High
10 School, and Whitney M. Young Magnet High School.