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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Millions of Americans have discovered the joys of walking, running, hiking, and cycling the rapidly expanding trails that crisscross our great nation; and

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WHEREAS, Central Illinois is at the heart of and is a critical link for the 6,800-mile American Discovery Trail, the 3,700-mile Great American Rail-Trail, and the 535-mile Grand Illinois Trail; and

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WHEREAS, The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Area and the Illinois Hennepin Canal Parkway State Park almost reach from Chicagoland to the Mississippi River, aside from a 15.7-mile gap between the City of LaSalle and the Village of Bureau in central Illinois, along the scenic Illinois River; and

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WHEREAS, When this 15.7-mile gap becomes a trail along existing rail lines, these great and grand trails from the Atlantic to the Pacific and across Illinois will be, in essence, linked at their center here in America's Heartland; and

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WHEREAS, Leading citizens and organizations in central Illinois and Washington, D.C. have come together to work to

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1 connect this "missing link" in our trails systems, including
2 Director Colleen Callahan of the Department of Natural
3 Resources and the National Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in
4 Washington, D.C.; and

5 WHEREAS, There are also a number of supportive community
6 leaders and officials all along the 200 miles of the Hennepin
7 and I&M Canals, including Senator Win Stoller, Senator Sue
8 Rezin, former member of Congress and U.S. Secretary of
9 Transportation and current U.S. Rails-to-Trails Hall of Famer
10 Ray LaHood, former Mayor of Ottawa Robert Eschbach, La Moille
11 School District Superintendent Jay McCracken, Carus
12 Environmental Board Chair Inga Carus, community leader Todd
13 Volker, and many others; and

14 WHEREAS, Further proponents and supporters of
15 Rails-to-Trails projects include Democrats and Republicans,
16 governments and nonprofits, and citizens all across central
17 Illinois; and

18 WHEREAS, Significant funding has been appropriated for
19 Rails-to-Trails projects in the 2022 U.S. Surface
20 Transportation Act; therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we enthusiastically

1 support Rails-to-Trails projects to make a reality of
2 connecting Americans from coast to coast and from Chicago to
3 all of Illinois through the marvelous trails of our nation and
4 State.