

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 5. The Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Act
5 is amended by changing Section 20 as follows:

6 (525 ILCS 22/20)

7 Sec. 20. Establishment of the Healthy Forests, Wetlands,
8 and Prairies Grant Program.

9 (a) The Department of Natural Resources, subject to
10 appropriation, shall establish and administer a Healthy
11 Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program to restore
12 degraded forest lands and native prairies and to promote the
13 growth of native vegetation that removes carbon dioxide from
14 the atmosphere and helps mitigate the impact of climate
15 change.

16 (b) Entities that may apply to participate in the Healthy
17 Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program include:

18 (1) State agencies and units of local government,
19 including, but not limited to, municipalities, townships,
20 counties, forest preserves, and park districts;

21 (2) conservation land trusts;

22 (3) not-for-profit entities with conservation
23 missions, including, but not limited to, climate change

1 mitigation, preservation of natural lands, and
2 conservation of the State's natural resources; and

3 (4) other entities that, because of their missions,
4 are determined by the Department to be eligible recipients
5 of the grants under this Act.

6 (c) At least 75% of the moneys appropriated for the
7 Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program shall be
8 awarded to the State agencies, units of local government, land
9 trusts, and other entities that the Department determines are
10 eligible for a grant under this Section. The Department may
11 use an amount not to exceed 23% of the moneys appropriated for
12 the Program for the purposes of restoring degraded forest
13 lands and native prairies and to promote the growth of native
14 vegetation that remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and
15 help mitigate the impact of climate change. The Department may
16 use an amount not to exceed 2% of the moneys appropriated for
17 the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program for
18 administrative costs associated with the Program.

19 (d) The Department shall adopt any rules necessary for the
20 implementation of this Act, including rules establishing
21 requirements and timeframes for the submission of grant
22 applications by entities that are authorized to apply to
23 participate in the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies
24 Grant Program.

25 (e) Grants provided under this Act may be used by eligible
26 entities for the purpose of:

1 (1) matching funds for federal or private dollars for
2 projects that forward the goal of climate change
3 mitigation through promotion of the management, planting,
4 maintaining, and preserving of native grasses, plants, and
5 trees;

6 (2) financing projects along roadways and in parks and
7 forest preserves on public or private lands to plant
8 native trees and prairie grasses demonstrated to absorb
9 carbon;

10 (3) financing projects that promote the stewardship of
11 existing public and private urban forests and natural
12 lands, including the removal of invasive or nonnative
13 plant species;

14 (4) funding regional teams tasked with planting native
15 prairie grasses and trees, prescribed burning for the
16 maintenance of natural lands, removing invasive plant
17 species, and educational outreach; ~~and~~

18 (5) promoting education and marketing regarding local
19 projects or steps community members may take to promote
20 the growth of native vegetation that removes carbon
21 dioxide from the atmosphere; and -

22 (6) financing shoreline restoration and protection
23 projects on behalf of counties and park districts.

24 (Source: P.A. 103-923, eff. 1-1-25.)