

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.)