



HR0004

LRB104 03510 LAW 13533 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Soil is an essential natural resource, and Illinois farmers and professionals play a critical role in managing Illinois soil and water resources; and

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WHEREAS, The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines soil health as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans; and

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WHEREAS, The implementation of soil health principles across the Illinois landscape is not new but has only recently been recognized as an urgent part of the need to prevent soil degradation, return organic resources to the soil or compost, protect groundwater used for drinking water, and combat climate change; the degradation of soil can be rapid, while the formation and regeneration processes can be very slow; and

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WHEREAS, The protection of Illinois soils is essential to long-term prosperity and sustainability of the soil and water resources of our State, counties, and cities, and the six basic principles of soil health necessary for that protection are to:

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- (1) minimize soil disturbance and external inputs,

1 including reduced tillage and using compost as a beneficial
2 product to increase soil organic matter;

3 (2) maximize plant and microbial diversity;

4 (3) maintain the presence of living roots;

5 (4) keep the soil covered, including with cover crops
6 and crop residue, to armor the soil;

7 (5) integrate animals into land management, including
8 grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects, or keystone
9 species, such as earthworms; and

10 (6) incorporate the context of local conditions in
11 decision-making, including for example soil type, topography,
12 and time of year; and

13 WHEREAS, Soil health principles and the associated
14 voluntary practices of no-till, cover crops, nutrient
15 management plans, and longer crop rotations enhance the
16 ability of farmers to meet the non-point source pollution
17 goals for nitrate-nitrogen and phosphorus; it is essential to
18 reduce the amount of nutrients flowing off of farm fields and
19 into our watersheds; with these reduced nutrient losses from
20 agriculture lands, which are detailed in the Illinois Nutrient
21 Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs), farmers will be able to meet
22 desired outcomes as outlined by the Mississippi River Basin
23 Hypoxia Task Force for the Gulf of Mexico; and

24 WHEREAS, Soil health principles provide for the reduction

1 of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through the sequestration
2 of carbon within the upper reaches of the soil profile; this
3 carbon mitigation improves the organic matter content in the
4 soil and provides a stable biome for soil organisms, improves
5 nutrient transfer from soil to root, and increases water
6 infiltration and water-holding capacity; and

7 WHEREAS, Despite soil's importance to human health, the
8 environment, nutrition and food, feed, fiber, and fuel
9 production, there is little public awareness of the importance
10 of soil protection; and

11 WHEREAS, Illinois soils are some of the best in the world,
12 having the ability to sink carbon and reverse climate change,
13 grow nutritious food for Illinois communities, and keep
14 waterways clean; and

15 WHEREAS, It is imperative that the State of Illinois
16 actively raise awareness on the importance of soil health and
17 promote its stewardship to safeguard this resource for future
18 generations of Illinois citizens; therefore, be it

19 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
20 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
21 we declare March 2 through March 8, 2025 as Illinois Soil
22 Health Week in the State of Illinois; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we encourage the celebration of Soil Health
2 Week and its related activities to increase the awareness of
3 Illinois farmers, eaters, and those involved in agribusiness
4 of the importance of the air and water quality environment for
5 all citizens of this State; and be it further

6 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
7 delivered to the Director of the Department of Agriculture,
8 the Office of the Governor, the Chair of the Illinois Senate
9 Agriculture Committee, and the Chair of the Illinois House
10 Agriculture & Conservation Committee.