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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Illinois barns are witnesses to the role of agriculture in our State's image and its economy and serve as scenic landmarks for residents and visitors alike; and

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WHEREAS, Historic barns and agricultural structures across rural Illinois symbolize important Illinois values of heritage, hard work, productivity, and closeness to the land and community with the people who built them; and

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WHEREAS, Historic barns uphold the historic rural qualities of the State's landscape, along with providing a picturesque atmosphere for the State's citizens and visitors to enjoy; and

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WHEREAS, These structures provide insight into our distinctive agricultural history and heritage, as well as a visual description of rural life, both past and present, in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, Local historic preservation and community organizations in at least 10 counties across Illinois highlight local barns with organized or self-guided barn tours, the first of which began in Greene County in 1984 and has continued every September since as part of Greene County Days; and

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1 WHEREAS, One private Illinois barn preservation
2 organization, the Illinois Barn Alliance, released a statewide
3 survey in August, 2005, and found that residents in 46 Illinois
4 counties have conducted barn surveys, organized barn tours, or
5 engaged in other activities that directly promote historic
6 barns; and

7 WHEREAS, While historic barns are cherished by so many
8 Illinois residents and visitors, many barns can no longer
9 produce the necessary income to prevent damage by decay or
10 demolition, or the barns become threatened when the surrounding
11 land is removed from active agricultural use; and

12 WHEREAS, Many states, including Iowa, Wisconsin, New York,
13 Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire enacted legislation creating
14 barn preservation and restoration programs to assist barn
15 owners with their efforts to preserve these cultural and
16 architectural treasures for the enjoyment and economic benefit
17 of this and future generations; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
19 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
20 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Department of Commerce and
21 Economic Opportunity (DCEO), in consultation with the
22 Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Historic Preservation

1 Agency, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and any
2 other public entities as the DCEO deems necessary, shall
3 conduct a study of (i) current historic barn restoration and
4 preservation efforts and needs in Illinois, (ii) the benefits
5 that a historic barn restoration and preservation program in
6 Illinois could have on tourism and other economic development
7 activities in rural areas, and (iii) programs and incentives in
8 place in other states to promote historic barn restoration and
9 preservation; the DCEO shall report its findings to the
10 Governor and the General Assembly by December 1, 2008; and be
11 it further

12 RESOLVED, That in conducting its study the DCEO shall also
13 consult with the Illinois Barn Alliance, Landmarks Illinois,
14 and any other private local historical, preservation, and
15 community organizations engaged in promoting and preserving
16 historic barns in their communities or counties; and be it
17 further

18 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution shall be
19 presented to the Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity,
20 to the Director of Agriculture, to the Director of the Illinois
21 Historic Preservation Agency, and to the Director of the
22 Illinois Department of Transportation.