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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, It is the policy of the State of Illinois to provide and maintain a healthful environment for the benefit of this and future generations; and

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WHEREAS Through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, it is the State's mission is to manage, conserve, and protect Illinois' natural, recreational, and cultural resources, further the public's understanding and appreciation of those resources, and promote Illinois' natural resources for present and future generations; and

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WHEREAS, The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, prepared by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, provides specific goals for protection of major habitats in the Northeastern Morainal Natural Division of Illinois, identifies specific action items to support the Forest, Farmland and Prairie, Wetlands, and Streams Campaigns, and identifies the Lake-McHenry Wetlands as a Conservation Opportunity Area containing rare wetland types and rare wetland and grassland species not found elsewhere in Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, The National Wildlife Refuge System is a national network of public lands managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and set aside to conserve America's fish,

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1 wildlife, and plants; and

2 WHEREAS, On March 21, 2012, the United States Fish and
3 Wildlife Service released its environmental assessment of the
4 proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge and recommended
5 that a refuge consisting of core areas linked by corridors be
6 established in McHenry County, Illinois and Walworth County,
7 Wisconsin; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service goals
9 for the proposed refuge are to:

10 (1) protect and enhance habitats for federal trust species
11 and species of management concern with special emphasis on
12 grassland dependent migratory birds and protection of
13 wetlands and grasslands, and

14 (2) create opportunities for hunting and fishing, wildlife
15 observation and photography, and environmental education
16 and interpretation, while promoting activities that
17 complement the purposes of the refuge and other protected
18 lands in the region, and

19 (3) promote science, education, and research through
20 partnerships to inform land management decisions and
21 encourage continued responsible stewardship of the natural
22 resources of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge; and

23 WHEREAS, The proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge,

1 which lies within the Lake McHenry Wetlands Conservation
2 Opportunity Area, will provide habitat for at least 60
3 State-listed plant and animal species and support habitat
4 protection goals identified for the Northeastern Morainal
5 Natural Division of Illinois and Campaign action items
6 identified in the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan; and

7 WHEREAS, Designation of the Hackmatack National Wildlife
8 Refuge will serve to assist, protect, conserve, and further the
9 management of the State's endangered and threatened species and
10 their habitats, as well as the refuge's namesake, the tamarack
11 tree, which is known as the "hackmatack" in at least one Native
12 American language, is a rare remnant of the glacial history of
13 Northern Illinois, and is found in the area of the proposed
14 refuge; and

15 WHEREAS, Increased recreational opportunities from the
16 creation of the refuge will help address child obesity and
17 other pressing health conditions in Illinois where one in 5
18 Illinois children is obese and 62% of Illinois adults are
19 overweight or obese; the refuge will complement efforts of the
20 Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Chicago
21 Wilderness to partner with organizations to promote outdoor
22 play and recreation; and

23 WHEREAS, Children benefit from access to the outdoors in

1 many ways, and the creation of the refuge will expand their
2 opportunities to experience nature; studies show that when
3 children spend time outdoors feelings of anxiety and depression
4 decrease, concentration and performance at school improve, and
5 an early appreciation and love of nature is fostered; young
6 people who spend time in nature are also more likely to be
7 strong advocates for the environment as adults; and

8 WHEREAS, Wildlife refuges are good for Illinois' economy,
9 and outdoor recreation opportunities, such as boating,
10 camping, fishing, hunting, picnicking, sightseeing, wildlife
11 observation, swimming, and trail use, create a \$3.2 billion
12 annual economic impact in Illinois, supporting 33,000 jobs
13 Statewide; therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-SEVENTH GENERAL
15 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we support the United
16 States Fish and Wildlife Service in its efforts to establish a
17 new national wildlife refuge on the Illinois-Wisconsin border
18 to be named the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge; and be it
19 further

20 RESOLVED, That we urge the Governor to represent the State
21 of Illinois as a supporter of the United States Fish and
22 Wildlife Service's efforts to establish the Hackmatack
23 National Wildlife Refuge as appropriate; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we urge the Illinois Department of Natural
2 Resources to work in partnership with the United States Fish
3 and Wildlife Service to make the Hackmatack National Wildlife
4 Refuge a reality; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
6 presented to the President of the United States, Barack Obama,
7 the Governor of the State of Illinois, the Secretary of the
8 United States Department of the Interior, the Director of the
9 Midwest Region of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service,
10 the Director of Natural Resources, and members of Illinois'
11 congressional delegation.