



Sen. Rachel Ventura

Filed: 2/29/2024

10300SB2781sam001

LRB103 37263 BDA 70130 a

1 AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 2781

2 AMENDMENT NO. _____. Amend Senate Bill 2781 by replacing
3 everything after the enacting clause with the following:

4 "Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds it is in
7 the interest of the State to encourage natural solutions as
8 one component of the State's efforts to reduce and remediate
9 the impacts of climate change. Natural solutions must include
10 planting native trees and other vegetation demonstrated to
11 reduce carbon dioxide. To accomplish this purpose, the State
12 must offer assistance to other units of local government that
13 are taking steps to fight climate change by restoring forests,
14 wetlands, prairies, and other landscapes that are native to
15 Illinois and that are demonstrated to have a positive
16 environmental impact.

1 Section 10. State goal. It is the goal of the State that
2 there be no overall net loss of the State's existing forest,
3 prairie, or wetland acres or their functional value due to
4 State-supported activities. Further, the State and units of
5 local government shall preserve, enhance, and create forests,
6 prairies, and wetlands where practical in order to mitigate
7 the impact of climate change and reduce carbon dioxide from
8 the atmosphere.

9 Section 15. Receipt of federal moneys. The Department of
10 Natural Resources may receive federal moneys to administer a
11 Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program.

12 Section 20. Establishment of the Healthy Forests,
13 Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Program.

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

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

23 (1) State agencies and units of local government,

1 including, but not limited to, municipalities, townships,
2 counties, forest preserves, and park districts;

3 (2) conservation land trusts;

4 (3) not-for-profit entities with conservation
5 missions, including, but not limited to, climate change
6 mitigation, preservation of natural lands, and
7 conservation of the State's natural resources; and

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

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

24 (d) The Department shall adopt any rules necessary for the
25 implementation of this Act, including rules establishing
26 requirements and timeframes for the submission of grant

1 applications by entities that are authorized to apply to
2 participate in the Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies
3 Grant Program.

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

6 (1) matching funds for federal or private dollars for
7 projects that forward the goal of climate change
8 mitigation through promotion of the management, planting,
9 maintaining, and preserving of native grasses, plants, and
10 trees;

11 (2) financing projects along roadways and in parks and
12 forest preserves on public or private lands to plant
13 native trees and prairie grasses demonstrated to absorb
14 carbon;

15 (3) financing projects that promote the stewardship of
16 existing public and private urban forests and natural
17 lands, including the removal of invasive or nonnative
18 plant species;

19 (4) funding regional teams tasked with planting native
20 prairie grasses and trees, prescribed burning for the
21 maintenance of natural lands, removing invasive plant
22 species, and educational outreach; and

23 (5) promoting education and marketing regarding local
24 projects or steps community members may take to promote
25 the growth of native vegetation that removes carbon
26 dioxide from the atmosphere.

1 Section 25. Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant
2 Fund. The Healthy Forest, Wetlands, and Prairies Grant Fund
3 shall be administered by the Department of Natural Resources.
4 The Fund may receive moneys appropriated by the General
5 Assembly or from the federal government, private donations, or
6 any other legal source. Subject to the limitations in
7 subsection (c) of Section 20 of this Act, moneys in the Fund
8 shall be used by the Department for the purpose of providing
9 grant assistance in accordance with this Act and for the
10 purpose of administering the grant program established under
11 this Act.

12 Section 90. The Department of Natural Resources Act is
13 amended by changing Section 1-15 as follows:

14 (20 ILCS 801/1-15)

15 Sec. 1-15. General powers and duties.

16 (a) It shall be the duty of the Department to investigate
17 practical problems, implement studies, conduct research and
18 provide assistance, information and data relating to the
19 technology and administration of the natural history,
20 entomology, zoology, and botany of this State; the geology and
21 natural resources of this State; the water and atmospheric
22 resources of this State; and the archeological and cultural
23 history of this State.

1 (b) The Department (i) shall obtain, store, and process
2 relevant data; recommend technological, administrative, and
3 legislative changes and developments; cooperate with other
4 federal, state, and local governmental research agencies,
5 facilities, or institutes in the selection of projects for
6 study; cooperate with the Board of Higher Education and with
7 the public and private colleges and universities in this State
8 in developing relevant interdisciplinary approaches to
9 problems; and evaluate curricula at all levels of education
10 and provide assistance to instructors and (ii) may sponsor an
11 annual conference of leaders in government, industry, health,
12 and education to evaluate the state of this State's
13 environment and natural resources.

14 (c) The Director, in accordance with the Personnel Code,
15 shall employ such personnel, provide such facilities, and
16 contract for such outside services as may be necessary to
17 carry out the purposes of the Department. Maximum use shall be
18 made of existing federal and state agencies, facilities, and
19 personnel in conducting research under this Act.

20 (c-5) The Department may use the services of, and enter
21 into necessary agreements with, outside entities for the
22 purpose of evaluating grant applications and for the purpose
23 of administering or monitoring compliance with grant
24 agreements. Contracts under this subsection shall not exceed 5
25 2 years, without an executed extension in length.

26 (d) In addition to its other powers, the Department has

1 the following powers:

2 (1) To obtain, store, process, and provide data and
3 information related to the powers and duties of the
4 Department under this Act. This subdivision (d)(1) does
5 ~~not~~ give authority to the Department to require reports
6 from nongovernmental sources or entities.

7 (2) To cooperate with and support the Illinois Science
8 and Technology Advisory Committee and the Illinois
9 Coalition for the purpose of facilitating the effective
10 operations and activities of such entities. Support may
11 include, but need not be limited to, providing space for
12 the operations of the Committee and the Illinois
13 Coalition.

14 (e) The Department is authorized to make grants to local
15 not-for-profit organizations for the purposes of development,
16 management, maintenance, and study of wetland areas, forests,
17 prairies, and other landscapes demonstrated to reduce the
18 impact of climate change.

19 (f) The Department has the authority to accept, receive
20 and administer on behalf of the State any gifts, bequests,
21 donations, income from property rental and endowments. Any
22 such funds received by the Department shall be deposited into
23 the DNR Special Projects Fund, a trust fund in the State
24 treasury, and used for the purposes of this Act or, when
25 appropriate, for such purposes and under such restrictions,
26 terms and conditions as are predetermined by the donor or

1 grantor of such funds or property. Any accrued interest from
2 money deposited into the DNR Special Projects Fund shall be
3 reinvested into the Fund and used in the same manner as the
4 principal. The Director shall maintain records which account
5 for and assure that restricted funds or property are disbursed
6 or used pursuant to the restrictions, terms or conditions of
7 the donor.

8 (g) The Department shall recognize, preserve, and promote
9 our special heritage of recreational hunting and trapping by
10 providing opportunities to hunt and trap in accordance with
11 the Wildlife Code.

12 (h) Within 5 years after the effective date of this
13 amendatory Act of the 102nd General Assembly, the Department
14 shall fly a United States Flag, an Illinois flag, and a POW/MIA
15 flag at all State parks. Donations may be made by groups and
16 individuals to the DNR Special Projects Fund for costs related
17 to the implementation of this subsection.

18 (Source: P.A. 102-388, eff. 1-1-22; 102-699, eff. 4-19-22;
19 103-363, eff. 7-28-23.)

20 Section 95. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
21 Section 5.1015 as follows:

22 (30 ILCS 105/5.1015 new)

23 Sec. 5.1015. The Healthy Forests, Wetlands, and Prairies
24 Grant Fund."