GEORGE H. RYAN
GOVERNOR

                         August 3, 2001

To the Honorable Members of the
     Illinois House of Representatives
     92nd General Assembly

     Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor by
Article IV, Section 9(e) of the Illinois Constitution of
1970, and re-affirmed by the People of the State of Illinois
by popular referendum in 1974, and conforming to the standard
articulated by the Illinois Supreme Court in People ex Rel.
Klinger v. Howlett, 50 Ill. 2d 242 (1972), Continental
Illinois National Bank and Trust Co. v. Zagel, 78 Ill. 2d 387
(1979), People ex Rel. City of Canton v. Crouch, 79 Ill. 2d
356 (1980), and County of Kane v. Carlson, 116 Ill. 2d 186
(1987), that gubernatorial action be consistent with the
fundamental purposes and the intent of the bill, I hereby
return House Bill 1696, "AN ACT concerning natural
resources," with my specific recommendations for change.

     House Bill 1696 provides that sworn law enforcement
officers with arrest authority hired after July 1, 2001 must
meet minimum professional standards which include holding a
4-year degree. While the requirement of a 4-year degree for
entry level police applicants is not unusual and has become
part of a national trend to improve the quality of law
enforcement personnel hired by police agencies at every level
of government, I believe that such a requirement dismisses
potential candidates who have sound law enforcement
experience and less than a 4-year degree.

     Although I understand the impetus behind a 4-year degree
requirement, I believe that it will put the State at
disadvantage by unnecessarily eliminating otherwise qualified
Conservation Police Officer candidates who lack only a 4-year
degree.

     Therefore, I offer the following recommendation for
change:

          On page 1, line 20, after hold, by inserting, " (i)
          a 2-year degree and 3 consecutive years of
          experience as a police officer with the same law
          enforcement agency or (ii)"

     With this change, House Bill 1696 will have my approval.
I respectfully request your concurrence.

                              Sincerely,
                              s/GEORGE H. RYAN
                              Governor