

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12
SECOND PRINTING

Unofficial Copy
M4

2001 Regular Session
11r1957
CF 11r1880

By: **Senators Frosh and Stoltzfus**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2001

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 14, 2001

Returned to second reading: March 16, 2001

Senate action: Adopted with floor amendments

Read second time: March 16, 2001

RESOLUTION NO. 4

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Cover Crop Cost Share Program - Expanded Area and Increased**
3 **Appropriation**

4 FOR the purpose of urging the Governor to expand the geographic area covered under
5 the Cover Crop Cost Share Program to a certain area and ~~to increase State~~
6 ~~appropriation for the Program to a certain amount to include a certain amount~~
7 ~~in the annual State budget to fund a certain objective; urging the Maryland~~
8 ~~Department of the Environment Agriculture to explore the availability of federal~~
9 ~~funding for the Cover Crop Cost Share Program; and generally relating to a~~
10 certain expansion of, and a certain appropriation for, the Cover Crop Cost Share
11 Program.

12 WHEREAS, As the largest estuary in the United States, the Chesapeake Bay is
13 both a State and national treasure; and

14 WHEREAS, In accordance with the Chesapeake Bay Agreements, it is
15 Maryland's goal to reduce pollution of the State's waters by a reduction of 40% in
16 nitrogen run off from fields to groundwater and eventually to the Chesapeake Bay;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Research conducted in Maryland has clearly demonstrated that of
19 all best management practices (BMPs), the planting of cover crops, such as rye,
20 wheat, oats, and barley, is the most effective strategy that farmers can utilize in
21 meeting this State goal; and

22 WHEREAS, Data collected by scientists at the University of Maryland has
23 verified that for each acre planted in cover crops, approximately 25 pounds of

1 nitrogen are removed from the soil and, thus, from the groundwater, which indicates
2 that continuous planting of cover crops will result in a reduction in nitrogen loss that
3 is far greater than 40%; and

4 WHEREAS, Since the planting of cover crops accomplishes nitrogen removal at
5 an approximate cost of \$1 per pound, this BMP is also one of the most cost-effective
6 control strategies available; and

7 WHEREAS, Without State assistance the economic return for individual
8 farmers planting cover crops is minimal, and each year applications for the Cover
9 Crop Cost Share Program number far more than funds available to accommodate all
10 those who would like to participate; and

11 WHEREAS, The Water Quality Improvement Act of 1998 authorized \$1,500,000
12 in funding for a cover crop program on the Eastern Shore, an amount that was
13 increased to \$2,000,000 for FY2001; and

14 WHEREAS, Expanding the Program, both in terms of the geographic area
15 covered and the amount of State funds available, would result annually in as many as
16 200,000 acres planted in cover crops and thus, a reduction of 5,000,000 pounds of
17 nitrogen run off; now, therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
19 Governor is urged to recognize the vital significance of the Cover Crop Cost Share
20 Program to the environmental and economic well-being of the State by expanding the
21 geographic area covered under the Program to include the entire State and ~~by~~
22 annually appropriating \$6,000,000 of State funding for Program purposes by
23 including a sufficient amount in the annual State budget to fund this objective; and
24 be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Maryland Department of Agriculture is urged to explore
26 the availability of federal funding for the Cover Crop Cost Share Program; and be it
27 further

28 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
29 Legislative Services to the Maryland Congressional Delegation: Senators Paul S.
30 Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510;
31 and Representatives Wayne T. Gilchrest, Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Benjamin L. Cardin,
32 Albert R. Wynn, Steny Hamilton Hoyer, Roscoe G. Bartlett, Elijah E. Cummings, and
33 Constance A. Morella, House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and be it
34 further

35 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
36 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
37 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; the
38 Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates; and Hagner R.
39 Mister, Secretary of the State Department of Agriculture.

