

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7

Unofficial Copy
M4

2001 Regular Session
(11r1880)

ENROLLED RESOLUTION
-- Environmental Matters/Budget and Taxation --

Introduced by **Delegate Guns**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this
____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, ____ M.

Speaker.

RESOLUTION NO. _____

1 A House 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

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

5 WHEREAS, Data collected by scientists at the University of Maryland has
6 verified that for each acre planted in cover crops, approximately 25 pounds of
7 nitrogen are removed from the soil and, thus, from the groundwater, which indicates
8 that continuous planting of cover crops will result in a reduction in nitrogen loss that
9 is far greater than 40%; and

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

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

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

20 WHEREAS, Expanding the Program, both in terms of the geographic area
21 covered and the amount of State funds available, would result annually in as many as
22 200,000 acres planted in cover crops and thus, a reduction of 5,000,000 pounds of
23 nitrogen run off; now, therefore, be it

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

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

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

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