

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7

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2001 Regular Session
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By: **Delegate Guns**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2001

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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; and generally relating to a
7 certain expansion of, and a certain appropriation for, the Cover Crop Cost Share
8 Program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 WHEREAS, Expanding the Program, both in terms of the geographic area
2 covered and the amount of State funds available, would result annually in as many as
3 200,000 acres planted in cover crops and thus, a reduction of 5,000,000 pounds of
4 nitrogen run off; now, therefore, be it

5 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the
6 Governor is urged to recognize the vital significance of the Cover Crop Cost Share
7 Program to the environmental and economic well-being of the State by expanding the
8 geographic area covered under the Program to include the entire State and by
9 annually appropriating \$6,000,000 of State funding for Program purposes; and be it
10 further

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