

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12  
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2001 Regular Session  
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By: **Senators Frosh and Stoltzfus**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2001  
Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

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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

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RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

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.

