

ILLINOIS PARTNERS FOR **NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION ACT**

**ACTION NEEDED:**  
**Co-Sponsor, Support**

**LEGISLATION SUMMARY:**

Adds a new purpose and increases funding to the Partners for Conservation Fund in order to implement Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.



Westlake Village Golf Course | August 29, 2012

**OVERVIEW:**

- Excessive levels of nutrients are **degrading the quality of streams, rivers, and lakes within Illinois** and contributing to the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Since 2013, Illinois EPA and Dept. of Agriculture have been **collaborating with academics, environmental nonprofits, representatives of federal, state, and local agencies, wastewater treatment professionals, and the agricultural community** to develop the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. This group released the Strategy in 2015 and biennial reports on its implementation in 2017 and 2019.<sup>1</sup>
- The Strategy **sets a milestone to reduce nitrogen in Illinois waters by 15% and phosphorus by 25% by 2025.**

- Additional resources are needed** to administer and implement the Strategy in order to meet the Strategy's 2025 milestone. These include resources needed **for reporting, research, water quality monitoring, technical assistance** through the Illinois Department of Agriculture and Illinois Extension, for Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout the state, and to **provide cost-share funding for nutrient capture projects** on farmland, including on the state's lands leased for agriculture.
- The Illinois Partners for Nutrient Loss Reduction Act **extends and increases funding** for the Partners for Conservation Fund to fiscal year 2027. (Current funding is through fiscal 2021.)

**BACKGROUND:**

**What is nutrient pollution?**

Plants and animals need nitrogen and phosphorus to survive. But when too much of either is carried in runoff (from city streets and farm fields) or flows out of wastewater treatment plants, excess nutrients can fuel algal blooms that decrease oxygen needed by fish and other aquatic animals. In the Gulf of Mexico,

nutrients washed down by the Mississippi River have created a 'dead zone' that covers thousands of square miles. Algal blooms also lower property values, hinder recreation, and threaten public health. In addition, nutrient pollution can degrade drinking water quality and require utilities to install costly treatment equipment. The 2015 strategy was developed in response to the U.S. EPA 2008 Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan, which calls

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for each of the 12 states in the Mississippi River Basin to produce a plan to reduce the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen carried in rivers throughout the states and to the Gulf of Mexico. *Adapted from Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Factsheet July 2015<sup>2</sup>*

### Cost to Achieve

The ultimate target for each Mississippi River Basin state is a 45% reduction in both phosphorus and nitrogen.

The estimated cost to achieve this target in Illinois is \$800 million per year. SB2474/HB1792 will ramp up funding to implement the Strategy over the next six years in order to first meet the 2025 milestone. It calls for \$138 million to be invested in Strategy implementation, from \$18.135 million in year 2022 up to \$25.7 million in 2027.

## Illinois Partners for Nutrient Loss Reduction Act will...

Increase Illinois' capacity to meet the state's 2025 milestone to reduce nitrogen in Illinois waters by 15% and phosphorus by 25%.

### Current Funding Status

Since the Strategy was released in 2015, the State of Illinois has provided the Illinois EPA and Department of Agriculture with little new funding to implement the Strategy.

### Resolution 52

The Illinois Partners for Nutrient Loss Reduction Act fulfills the 101st General Assembly's Illinois Senate Resolution 52 pledging the General Assembly's help in attaining the Strategy's goals.<sup>3</sup>

## Midwest Overview

Other Midwest states are investing millions into their strategies and other clean water programs addressing nutrient pollution:

**IOWA** In 2018, Iowa passed a \$282 million water quality bill that provides \$156 million over 12 years for farmers to add cover crops, bioreactors, saturated buffers and other on-farm practices.<sup>4</sup>

**MINNESOTA** In 2008, Minnesota passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. From 2009 through 2034, about \$90 million each year will be invested into the Clean Water Fund to protect drinking water sources and to protect, enhance, and restore lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.<sup>5,6</sup>

**OHIO** In 2019, the Ohio General Assembly invested \$172 million in Governor DeWine's H2Ohio plan, the largest portion of which will support farmers implementing phosphorus reduction best practices.<sup>7</sup> Thirty million dollars in H2Ohio funding will be available for Ohio farmers in more than a dozen counties in 2020 to reduce agricultural phosphorus runoff and prevent algal blooms in Lake Erie.<sup>8</sup>

**WISCONSIN** In February 2020, the Wisconsin State Assembly approved a \$10 million plan to clean up Wisconsin waters. Addressing soil erosion and runoff and nitrogen optimization are part of the plan.<sup>9</sup>

**This legislation was developed with representatives from the Illinois EPA and departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources and is supported by these partner organizations:**



<sup>1</sup> Co.illinois.edu/nlrs

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/Documents/iepa/water-quality/watershed-management/nlrs/nutrient-factsheet-final%207-20-15.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/101/SR/PDF/10100SR0052lv.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2018/01/27/iowa-water-quality-what-282-million-bill-means-iowans/1068634001/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.legacy.mn.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Clean\\_Water\\_Report\\_web2.pdf](https://www.legacy.mn.gov/sites/default/files/resources/Clean_Water_Report_web2.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-s1-80a.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ocj.com/2019/11/h2ohio-strategies-and-farm-practices-outlined-by-gov-dewine/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ocj.com/2020/01/dewine-announces-availability-of-first-30-million-in-h2ohio-funds/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.wpr.org/assembly-approves-10m-plan-clean-wisconsin-water>