

## Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

There are 97 soil and water conservation districts making a difference in your community. No matter how big or small, each of the 102 counties is represented equally. From educating homeowners on practical utilization of water to helping rural landowners save soil and improve water quality; it takes everyone working together to protect our soil and water! Without these vital resources our communities can not thrive!



Illinois' "Gaming Bill" (SB0744) will provide \$10 million for Illinois' soil and water conservation districts. That funding level will allow the SWCDs to employ staff at levels that will better address today's work loads.

In addition, to providing money for the SWCDs, the slot machines at the race tracks are expected to generate as many as 40,000 restored and NEW jobs.

SB0744 is a bill Illinois cannot afford to allow to fail.



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## SB0744 Should be Considered a Jobs Bill

Senate Bill 0744 is referred to as the Illinois Gaming Bill. While it certainly does expand the gaming industry in Illinois it also provides for much more in the way of bolstering Illinois' economy and restoring long suffering agricultural and cultural programs that will create additional, new employment opportunities.

SB0744 will provide \$10 million to Illinois' soil and water conservation districts each year for five years.

- Forty vacant positions will be filled and the new employees will be trained. We expect another 10 - 15 jobs to be created.

The \$10 million from SB0744 will free up Partners for Conservation money that is currently being used for administrative needs. That money will be used for incentive payments to landowners to install conservation practices. On average, one full time construction job is generated for each \$25,000 in incentive payments made to landowners.

- We expect that more than 170 full time jobs will be created.

Filling vacant SWCD positions and employing up to 15 new service providers will assure more effective use of more than \$150 million in federal dollars as well as assuring that the money is able to be retained and spent in Illinois rather than being reallocated to other states.

- We expect that as many as 300 full-time jobs will be created.

Studies show that each dollar spent on conservation will generate an additional \$.70 in sales of goods and services.

- With that fact in mind, we expect that much of the \$108 million generated by expending all of the conservation incentive dollars available to Illinois will be used for employment purposes with as many as 400 new jobs being created.

SB0744 will provide \$1 million for forestry practices in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basin CREP areas.

- We expect that 10 jobs will be created. Because those 10 foresters will be able to concentrate on developing forestry management plans which often require logging and planting activities, we expect that an additional 15 - 20 secondary employment opportunities will be created.

SB0744 will provide \$4 million for the Extension Service and 4-H activities.

- We expect that short term, about 10 - 15 jobs will be created and long term, hundreds if not thousands of qualified job applicants will be available to meet future demand for a wide variety of employment opportunities.

SB0744 will provide \$5 million for state and county fairs.

- We estimate that as many as 100 jobs could be created to assist with fair and exhibit development as well as jobs needed to maintain and improve facilities to accommodate increased participation in fair events.

SB0744 will provide \$150,000 to the Cook County Forest Preserve District each year for five years to maintain a botanical Garden.

- We expect that at least 2 full-time and perhaps as many as 10 part-time jobs will be created.

SB0744 will provide \$2.5 million each year for five years to the Illinois Historic Sites Fund.

- We expect that 3 or 4 full-time jobs and as many as 35 part-time jobs will be created.

SB0744 will provide \$2.5 million to the Parks and Conservation Fund each year for five years.

- We expect that as many as 10 full-time jobs and perhaps as many as 25 part-time jobs will be created.

SB0744 will provide the opportunity for Illinois' five horse racing tracks to increase purses offered to winning jockeys and owners. Using other states that have allowed slot machines at horse race tracks as an example; we expect the horse racing industry to expand rapidly and to a great degree. If there is an increase in horse breeding, large animal veterinarians will increase as well. Farmers will need to provide food for a thriving horse industry and will once again include hay, oats and other food stocks used by horses in their cropping rotation. These forage crops will replace crops which generally require higher levels of nutrients and are often grown using more erosive cropping practices.

**Fact:** As of September 30, 2011, Illinois' Soil and Water Conservation Districts will need to spend more than \$520,000 to provide training to new employees that will replace experienced employees who have left or been laid off due to lack of funding.



## Soil and Water Conservation Districts are Working with Landowners in Four MRBI Watersheds

- The Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) is an \$11 million federal program. Targeted to four specific Illinois watershed areas to help producers implement a system of conservation practices that will control soil erosion, improve soil quality and provide wildlife habitat.
- SWCDs are working with landowners in these areas to implement nutrient management and reduction strategies designed to help address the Gulf Hypoxia issue.



**NOTE:** SWCDs DO NOT have taxing authority and must rely on state source funding to employ staff to administer programs.

The \$10 million line in SB0744 will allow SWCDs to be funded at a fully functional level for the first time in 74 years.

PROTECT & CONSERVE

## SB0744 Should be Considered a Jobs Bill

(Continued)

The return of a thriving horse industry in the state offers significant opportunities for greater revenue for state and local economies. More people will be needed to tend to the animals, maintain their buildings and transport their feed.

- We expect that between 2,200 and 3,000 full-time and part-time jobs will be created from the \$30 million that will be generated by allowing the installation of slot machines at race tracks.
- The jobs expected to be generated by a thriving horse industry is estimated to be in the tens of thousands.

SB0744 is called a gaming bill and is credited with expanding gambling in Illinois. It should also be credited with creating or restoring many thousands of long term jobs that will have long-lasting positive impacts to Illinois' economy.

Representative Lou Lang, Chicago Tribune, Sept, 25, 2011.

"A Chicago casino will generate 7,000 to 10,000 jobs at the facility and 15,000 to 20,000 construction jobs. In downstate Illinois, the legislation will rescue 30,000 to 40,000 agribusiness jobs, such as hay and grain farmers and horse breeders. Those jobs may disappear without the boost the bill will provide to the Illinois horse-racing industry."

Representative Lang, we are sorry to report that many of those 30,000 - 40,000 jobs have already disappeared. SB0744 must become law now if we are to avoid even more economic damage to our great state!



### Districts' Spotlight

#### Livingston County:

Currently, 35 percent of the producers in the 82,000-acre Indian Creek Watershed are participating in the MRBI project. The Indian Creek Watershed Project has a goal of reaching 75 percent producer participation.

Key to the project's success is research that provides guidance for precision nutrient control. Project partners, the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) work with participants to create nutrient management test plots. These plots will identify specific fertilizer application rates and treatments for finding the right balance between crop production needs and water quality in Indian Creek.

Recently, more than 120 producers toured five of the farms participating in the MRBI and the CTIC study. They met with participating landowners, and learned about the changes they made in their operations to meet MRBI criteria and viewed test plots that focused on nutrient management and the "4-Rs" (Right Source, Right Time, Right Place, and Right Rate).



Indian Creek Watershed MRBI Project Farm Tour.

Terry Bachtold, Livingston County SWCD Resource Conservationist and project manager for one, hopes that many of those attending the tour this year will be involved with MRBI and having their own operations as part of the Indian Creek Watershed Team Tour next year!

#### Bureau County:

The SWCD and project partners will assist landowners in voluntarily implementing best management or conservation practices to reduce downstream nutrient loading into local waters. The Big Bureau Creek Watershed is located within one of Illinois' high priority areas due to its high levels of excess nutrient runoff and sedimentation. The purpose of the MRBI is to improve the health of the Mississippi River watershed by working with producers to voluntarily implement conservation practices that **avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.**

The Big Bureau Creek Targeted Subwatershed Initiative was the only Illinois project selected in 2011. The total project funding request for FY2011-2014 was \$2,098,000. \$204,000 was approved for FY2011.



This restored wetland is an example of one of the practices that can be utilized to meet nutrient management goals for the project.

Project funding is administered by NRCS directly to eligible agricultural producers through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). This is an extraordinary financial and technical assistance commitment by the NRCS to the priority areas, above and beyond the regular conservation working lands programs. The purpose of the cooperative conservation partnership is to provide additional financial or technical assistance to producers and support the local NRCS and SWCD office with outreach and education efforts and water quality monitoring.