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State of Minnesota

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION

HOUSE FILE No. **151**

January 16, 2007

Authored by DeLaForest, Zellers, Hoppe, McNamara, Hackbarth and others

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs

February 22, 2007

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:

To Pass as Amended and re-referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

March 13, 2007

Committee Recommendation and Adoption of Report:

To Pass as Amended

Read Second Time

1.1 A resolution

1.2 memorializing the United States Congress to reauthorize the Conservation Reserve
1.3 Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program as part of the 2007 Farm Bill.

1.4 WHEREAS, the Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary federal program that
1.5 protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion, thereby safeguarding our nation's
1.6 soil and water resources while at the same time benefiting our nation's farmers and farming
1.7 communities; and

1.8 WHEREAS, some 33,000 Minnesota farms participate in the Conservation Reserve
1.9 Program, committing to take 1,800,000 of our state's most environmentally sensitive acres out
1.10 of agricultural production for a period of ten to 15 years; and

1.11 WHEREAS, Minnesota farmers have instituted conservation and erosion control measures
1.12 on these acres, including planting trees and native grasses, installing filter strips and riparian
1.13 buffers, and restoring wetlands important to wildlife including native and migrating waterfowl;
1.14 and

1.15 WHEREAS, through the Conservation Reserve Program, Minnesota farmers remove
1.16 environmentally sensitive acres from agricultural production and plant them with cover crops,
1.17 thereby contributing to a reduction in price-depressing crop surpluses and lowering the federal
1.18 government's price support expenditures for covered crops like corn, soybeans, and wheat; and

1.19 WHEREAS, the Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary federal program in which
1.20 Minnesota landowners protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property, thereby improving
1.21 wetland values and functions and providing valuable wildlife habitat; and

2.1 WHEREAS, the Conservation Reserve Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program have
2.2 the ability to sequester carbon in addition to providing erosion control, water quality protection,
2.3 and wildlife habitat; and

2.4 WHEREAS, in 2006 there were 14,500 acres enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program
2.5 in Minnesota, representing nearly ten percent of program acreage nationwide and trailing only
2.6 Arkansas and Nebraska in the number of acres enrolled; and

2.7 WHEREAS, recent United States Department of Agriculture decisions regarding rental
2.8 rates, appraisals, eligibility, and maintenance have limited enrollment in the Conservation Reserve
2.9 Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program well below the amount of acres authorized in the
2.10 2002 Farm Bill; and

2.11 WHEREAS, as successful and equitable conservation programs, the Conservation Reserve
2.12 Program and the Wetlands Reserve Program enjoy broad support in Minnesota from farming,
2.13 hunting, wildlife, and environmental communities; NOW, THEREFORE,

2.14 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it urges the United
2.15 States Department of Agriculture to utilize its authority to offer general sign-up enrollments
2.16 during 2007 with competitive market rental rates to achieve the enrollment of acres authorized
2.17 for the Conservation Reserve Program in the 2002 Farm Bill.

2.18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it urges the
2.19 Congress of the United States to reauthorize the Conservation Reserve Program with an enrollment
2.20 cap of 45,000,000 acres and the Wetlands Reserve Program as part of the 2007 Farm Bill.

2.21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota is
2.22 directed to prepare copies of this memorial and transmit them to the Speaker and the Clerk of
2.23 the United States House of Representatives, the President and the Secretary of the United States
2.24 Senate, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the chairs of congressional
2.25 committees with jurisdiction over agriculture, and Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in
2.26 Congress.