

By: Representatives K. Moore, Torres

HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR ARKANSAS POULTRY PRODUCERS IN
THE ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHED AND TO URGE A RETURN TO
GOOD FAITH NEGOTIATIONS.

Subtitle

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WHEREAS, a significant portion of the Illinois River Watershed lies within the State of Arkansas, including in Northwest Arkansas where poultry production is a cornerstone of the regional economy; and

WHEREAS, agriculture contributes more than twenty-five billion dollars (\$25,000,000,000) annually to Arkansas's economy, and poultry production, the state's largest agricultural sector, serves as a primary economic driver in many rural communities and supports thousands of farm families and jobs; and

WHEREAS, litigation involving nutrient management in the Illinois River Watershed has persisted for approximately forty (40) years, creating prolonged uncertainty and concerns about precedent that could negatively impact agricultural producers across Arkansas and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas poultry producers have demonstrated a longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship through significant investments in conservation practices, including nutrient management plans and other



science-based best management practices; and

WHEREAS, agriculture is a foundational industry in Arkansas, and farmers must be able to continue lawful operations without undue interference, consistent with the state's commitment to protecting private property rights; and

WHEREAS, meaningful and lasting progress is best achieved through cooperative, science-based solutions developed through good faith negotiations among all affected parties; and

WHEREAS, Arkansas met the forty percent (40%) total phosphorus load reduction in 2005 as set forth by the Arkansas-Oklahoma Arkansas River Compact Commission and has maintained a seventy-five percent to eighty percent (75%-80%) reduction over the last decade; and

WHEREAS, poultry producers, cattle ranchers, Arkansas municipalities, and poultry companies have invested over seven hundred fifty million dollars (\$750,000,000) in wastewater treatment plant improvements, phosphorus-based nutrient management plans, the removal of excess litter from the Illinois River Watershed, and poultry processing facility improvements to reduce the phosphorus discharged and land applied, or both, resulting in significant phosphorus concentration declines in the Illinois River, which are approaching the thirty-five thousandths milligrams per liter (0.035 mg/l) as recommended and agreed to by the states of Arkansas and Oklahoma in the 2016 Joint Study Committee and Scientific Professionals final report,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives:

- (1) Express the House of Representatives' strong support for Arkansas poultry producers operating within the Illinois River Watershed;
- (2) Recognize and commend the conservation efforts and environmental stewardship demonstrated by Arkansas poultry producers;

(3) Affirm the importance of protecting the right of farmers to operate and produce food and fiber while continuing to advance responsible environmental stewardship; and

(4) Reaffirm the House of Representatives' commitment to both environmental protection and the continued viability of agriculture as Arkansas's leading industry.