

Help WETLANDS today!

Ask your state senator to....

Vote "YES" on SB 246 - Senator Glick's good bill passed unanimously (8-0) out of her Senate Natural Resources Committee. It was then referred to, and passed out of, the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee because of the financial incentives to preserve wetlands. A full Senate vote will come soon.

Vote "NO" on HB 1383 - After passage by the House, it advanced quickly to the Senate with a full Senate vote also likely very soon. This bill would reduce the protection of wetlands by changing the class definitions to shift some Class III wetlands down to Class II, and Indiana cannot afford further erosion of wetland protection.

Talking points to emphasize that wetlands provide significant advantages that result in real (\$) savings: Wetlands...

- Reduce flooding by holding excess stormwater (most cost-effective stormwater infrastructure we have)
- Filter and purify water
- Replenish the groundwater for our wells
- Slow stormwater so there is less erosion
- Support Indiana's outdoor recreation economy, which generates more than \$15 billion in consumer spending a year
- Provide the most biologically-productive ecosystem

Background on loss of wetlands in Indiana:

- In the 1990's, DNR estimated that Indiana had already lost 85% of its original wetlands.
- A bill in 2021 (SB 389) added so many exemptions to Indiana's wetlands law that now 75% of the wetland acres impacted by construction are lost with no mitigation of their lost function.
- In 2023, the US Supreme Court significantly reduced federal protection of wetlands, essentially leaving the fate of wetlands up to the states. What Indiana does in state law matters more than ever.

FYI on the other two LWVIN environmental priorities:

WATER POLICY (HB 1305 and SB 249) and **COMMUNITY SOLAR** (HB 1193) bills unfortunately did not receive committee hearings so died in committee this year. Interest in dealing with Indiana's lack of any statewide water management policy is increasing so the issue will likely be an important focus next year. Interest in community solar is also growing. Renewable Energy Day at the Statehouse on Feb. 13th will focus on the advantages of allowing entities other than utilities to offer this option in Indiana.

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