

Protect Illinois Wetlands SB0771



Please support **SB0771**(Ellman) to Protect Wetlands Vital to Our Communities.

We Need Wetlands:

Wetlands reduce flooding of our communities by storing water during precipitation events, improve water quality by reducing nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and other water pollution, protect drinking water supplies, and provide critical habitat for much of Illinois' wildlife.

Wetlands Need Protection:

Unfortunately, recent Supreme Court decisions have greatly reduced federal protections for streams and wetlands formerly provided to states under the Clean Water Act. Illinois wetlands and streams that are vital for flood control, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality are now left unprotected due to the elimination of federal protections for "isolated wetlands" and certain ephemeral streams.

SB0771(Ellman), the "Wetlands and Small Stream Protection Act", provides for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to fill in the gaps left behind by loss of federal protection.

What it Will Do:

- Require that wetland developers obtain a permit from IDNR before destroying wetlands
- Place conditions on permittees obtaining IDNR permits, including requiring that the permittee avoid wetlands to the extent possible and compensate for the losses that the permittee's activity would have on floodwater retention, water quality and wildlife

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- Allow the Illinois counties that have strong wetlands protection programs to continue their work
- Charge permit applicants a fee for obtaining a permit that would pay for the program
- Help prevent a disastrous increase in flooding, wildlife loss and damage to water quality that will otherwise occur due to loss of federal protection

This Bill Will Not:

- **Require multiple permits** – developers that have obtained permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for activities affecting wetlands that are still protected by the Clean Water Act after the Supreme Court's decision would be exempted from having to obtain an IDNR permit. Also, developers that have obtained permits under approved county programs would be exempted.
- **Increase any regulation of agricultural activities.** All of the Clean Water Act exemptions for agricultural activities are fully incorporated into SB0771(Ellman).
- **Stop beneficial economic development** – SB0771(Ellman) simply seeks to restore the regulatory status quo that existed before the massive gap in federal protection of wetlands and small streams created by the Supreme Court.

Join Sierra Club Illinois and your neighbors in supporting Wetlands Protection!