

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 149

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 1, 1997

By Assemblyman DiGAETANO

- 1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** memorializing the Congress of the United States
2 to appropriate funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the
3 annually authorized level to conserve the nation's land, water and
4 recreational resources.
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- 6 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey contains a variety of natural resources
7 worthy of protection and preservation, and the people of this State have
8 supported the protection and preservation of these resources, most notably
9 through the Green Acres Program, which provides funds for open space
10 acquisition; and
- 11 **WHEREAS**, In 1964 the Congress of the United States enacted, with vigorous
12 bipartisan support, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), one
13 of the most far-reaching federal programs for conservation and recreation
14 purposes; and
- 15 **WHEREAS**, The LWCF is the most significant source of federal funding for the
16 acquisition of wilderness, forests, park lands, watershed areas, lands
17 requiring habitat protection, and lands possessing cultural and natural
18 heritage; and
- 19 **WHEREAS**, The LWCF is authorized by Congress to spend up to \$900 million
20 per year for land acquisition at the federal, state, and local levels; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, Approximately seven million acres of new federal lands have been
22 acquired through direct LWCF expenditures including about 55 new
23 National Park units, including national seashores, national lakeshores,
24 national trails, national rivers, national historic areas and national recreation
25 areas; and
- 26 **WHEREAS**, The LWCF has provided funding for acquisition of habitat for
27 endangered species, and approximately 750,000 acres have been added
28 to the national wildlife refuge system; and
- 29 **WHEREAS**, Although the royalties from offshore oil leasing revenues, the
30 source of LWCF funding, now provide over \$2 billion in annual revenues,
31 the Congress has gradually reduced the amount appropriated from the
32 fund, to the point where the LWCF has an unappropriated balance of \$11
33 billion; and
- 34 **WHEREAS**, The LWCF provides a non-regulatory approach to conservation
35 at no cost to the taxpayers of this nation; and

1 **WHEREAS**, Historically, the northeastern states, including New Jersey, have
2 received a disproportionately small share of moneys from the LWCF; and
3 New Jersey received no LWCF funds in 1996 while other states received
4 millions of dollars from the fund; now, therefore,

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6 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

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8 1. The Congress of the United States is memorialized to appropriate funds
9 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the annually authorized level
10 of \$900 million, and to assure proper distribution of these funds to all states
11 on a fair and equitable basis.

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13 2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of
14 the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk of the General Assembly,
15 shall be transmitted to the President and Vice President of the United States,
16 the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the majority and
17 minority leaders of the United States Senate and the United States House of
18 Representatives, and every member of Congress elected from this State.

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STATEMENT

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The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund has been responsible for the acquisition of nearly seven million acres of parkland and open space and the development of more than 37,000 parks and recreation projects. With our population expected to nearly double in the next century, the mission of the LWCF cannot be allowed to falter. New Jersey is taking a leadership position in urging the restoration of this federal fund to its annually authorized level of \$900 million per year.

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34 Memorizes Congress to appropriate authorized federal funds for land and
35 water conservation.