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SCR-83 International Year of Soils. (2015-2016)

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 83

CHAPTER 163

Relative to the International Year of Soils.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 08, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 83, Wolk. International Year of Soils.

This measure would declare 2015 as the International Year of Soils, and recognize the importance of healthy soils as a critical resource supplying an abundance of food, diverse habitats, water storage, and climate resiliency.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, For more than 60 consecutive years, California has been the number one agricultural state in the nation, producing more than 400 crop and livestock products and accounting for approximately 50 percent of the nation's supply of fruits, vegetables, and nuts; and

WHEREAS, Ninety-five percent of our food is directly or indirectly produced on our soils and the essential nutrients they contain; and

WHEREAS, It can take up to 1,000 years to form one centimeter of soil, and, with 33 percent of all global soil resources degraded, critical limits are being reached, making stewardship an urgent matter; and

WHEREAS, According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, more than 805 million people across the globe face hunger and malnutrition, and future population growth will require an approximate 60-percent increase in food production; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations launched the International Year of Soils on World Soil Day, December 5, 2014; and

WHEREAS, On January 6, 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture began its celebration of the International Year of Soils to highlight the importance of healthy soils for food security, ecosystems functions, and resilient farms and ranches; and

WHEREAS, California has launched its Healthy Soils Initiative and is pioneering efforts to incentivize building soil organic matter and provide research, education, and technical support to facilitate healthy soils and ensuring interagency coordination and collaboration; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring healthier soils by increasing the carbon content and soil organic matter can help enhance the long-term sustainability of California agriculture and its resiliency to climate change; and

WHEREAS, Improved soil health increases soil's water holding capacity and water infiltration rate, which can help optimize the management of California's scarce water supply; and

WHEREAS, Increasing soil health helps to improve food crop yields, help to increase soil fertility and the ability to hold plant nutrients and water, supports beneficial biological microbial diversity and populations, reduces soil erosion, and can be used to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases by sequestering carbon; and

WHEREAS, The building of soil organic matter can be supported by several management practices, including, but not limited to, minimal soil disturbance, residue soil cover, the use of cover crops, and the utilization of compost; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, the California Legislature enacted Senate Bill 389 (Monteith), Chapter 331, Statutes of 1997, commemorating completion of the state's most comprehensive soil inventory by designating San Joaquin Soil as the official State Soil; and

WHEREAS, We recognize the essential role of all of California's soils in supporting a thriving California economy and healthy environment and ensuring a sustainable and food secure future; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California hereby declares 2015 as the International Year of Soils; and be it further

Resolved, That on the occasion of the International Year of Soils, the Legislature recognizes the importance of healthy soils as a critical resource supplying an abundance of food, diverse habitats, water storage, and climate resiliency; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.