

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 210

Supporting the designation of December 5 of each year as “National Soil Health Day”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2023

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Accountability

RESOLUTION

Supporting the designation of December 5 of each year as
“National Soil Health Day”.

Whereas soil is an essential natural resource, and farmers and professionals in the United States play a critical role in managing United States soil and water resources;

Whereas the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture defines soil health as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans;

Whereas the concept of soil health across the United States landscape is not new, but is only recently recognized as needed to prevent soil degradation and combat climate change;

Whereas the degradation of soil can be rapid, while the formation and regeneration processes can be very slow;

Whereas the protection of United States soil is essential to the long-term prosperity and sustainability of the soil and water resources of the Nation;

Whereas the 6 basic principles of soil health necessary for that protection are to—

- (1) minimize soil disturbance and external inputs, including reduced tillage;
- (2) maximize plant and microbial diversity;
- (3) maintain the presence of living roots;
- (4) keep the soil covered, including with cover crops and crop residue, to armor the soil;
- (5) integrate animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects, or keystone species, such as earthworms; and
- (6) incorporate the context of local conditions in decision making, including, for example, soil type, topography, and time of year;

Whereas soil health principles and its associated practices of no-till, cover crops, nutrient management plans, and longer crop rotations enhance the ability of farmers to meet the nonpoint source pollution goals for nitrate-nitrogen and phosphorus;

Whereas it is essential to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing off of farm fields and into United States watersheds, and with these reduced nutrient losses from agriculture lands, farmers will be able to meet desired outcomes as outlined by the Mississippi River Basin Hypoxia Task Force for the Gulf of Mexico;

Whereas soil health principles provide for the reduction of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through the sequestration of carbon within the upper reaches of the soil profile, and this carbon mitigation improves the organic matter content in the soil and provides a stable biome for soil organisms, improves nutrient transfer from soil to root, and increases water infiltration and water-holding capacity;

Whereas despite soil's importance to human health, the environment, nutrition and food, feed, fiber, and fuel production, there is little public awareness of the importance of soil protection; and

Whereas the United States should be actively raising awareness of the importance of soil health and promoting its stewardship to safeguard this resource for future generations of United States citizens: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Soil
3 Health Day”; and

4 (2) calls upon this celebration and its related
5 activities to improve the awareness of United States
6 farmers and agribusiness toward the importance of
7 the air and water quality environment for all of the
8 citizens of the United States.

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