A bill currently in the Indiana legislature, SB 229, will lead to loss of wetlands. Wetlands are important because they
- purify water
- absorb excess water, and
  provide critical habitat for many species – 86 of Indiana's 144 species of greatest conservation need occur in wetlands (Indiana DNR)

**Before Feb. 24, please ask your State Rep. (bitly.com/INLegis) to oppose SB 229.**

Background: The Indiana Isolated Wetlands Law was carefully crafted in 2003 to preserve the state’s remaining wetlands that aren’t federally protected. The EPA estimates that Indiana has already lost more than 85% of its original wetlands.

SB 229 creates a major exemption to the Isolated Wetlands Law – it enables those who reconstruct drains to no longer need such a permit. A drain is a man-made ditch, a reengineered stream, or a subsurface field tile intended to improve surface water drainage.

What does “reconstruct” mean? Maintenance of drains, like cleaning or clearing obstructions, is already exempt. Adding an exemption for reconstruction is significant because by law ‘reconstruction’ includes enlarging, lengthening, and even rerouting drains.

Is this a big deal? Yes - these drains can be found on farms, as well as in residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial areas.

What is at stake? Reconstruction activities could cause extensive damage if they involve wetlands. 80% of the U.S. breeding bird population relies on wetlands.

Does the current law allow for drain reconstruction? The Wetlands Law in its current form does not stop reconstruction of drains, it just has a permit process to ensure that wetlands are preserved to the maximum extent possible and replaced when they can’t be preserved.