

## Help Preserve Wetlands. Ask Governor Holcomb to veto SEA 229.

Mar 13, 2020



*Eagle Marsh near Ft Wayne*

SEA 229 will lead to loss of wetlands. Wetlands are important because they purify water, absorb excess water, and provide critical habitat for many species.

**Background:** In the 1800's, Indiana's wetlands were drained to make way for farms and towns. Only 10 – 15% of the original wetlands are left. In 2003, the legislature recognized the value of preserving the remaining wetlands and wrote the Indiana Isolated Wetlands Law. SEA 229 creates a major new exemption to the Isolated Wetlands Law for reconstruction of regulated drains.

**What does “reconstruction” mean?** In the Drainage Code ‘reconstruction’ includes enlarging drains or “making any major change”. It is extensive work that could damage wetlands.

**How is SEA 229 a problem?**

- It opens a broad exemption that will hurt our remaining wetlands.
- It contains a key provision which is subjective and undefined (reconstruction is exempt if it does not “substantially change the characteristics of the drain”).
- It creates regulatory confusion with federally protected 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.

**Take Action:** Email Governor Holcomb at [GovHolcomb@gov.in.gov](mailto:GovHolcomb@gov.in.gov) and ask him to please protect Indiana's remaining wetlands and veto SEA 229.