

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 22

BY REPRESENTATIVES TRAVIS JOHNSON, ADAMS, BRASS, BRYANT, BUTLER, GARY CARTER, CORMIER, COX, CREWS, DUPLESSIS, FREEMAN, FREIBERG, GADBERRY, GAINES, HARRIS, HUGHES, JAMES, JEFFERSON, JENKINS, MIKE JOHNSON, JONES, LACOMBE, LARVADAIN, LYONS, MOORE, NEWELL, CHARLES OWEN, SELDERS, THOMPSON, TURNER, AND WILLARD AND SENATOR JACKSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development to study the feasibility of creating a bike and walking trail along the Mississippi River spanning approximately eighty miles, beginning in Vidalia, Louisiana, and ending in East Carroll Parish in Lake Providence and make recommendations in regards to the creation.

WHEREAS, according to the Adventure Cycling Association, a leading organization that works with government officials, several states have commissioned studies and surveys on the economic benefits of bicycle and trail tourism, which contributes significantly to economies nationally; and

WHEREAS, the BBC Research and Consulting company conducted a recent study in Arkansas concluding that bicycling in Northwest Arkansas provides an economic benefit of \$137 million, with bike tourism serving as an economic driver from tourists spending \$27 million at local businesses each year; and

WHEREAS, the research also concluded that houses within .25 miles of the Razorback Regional Greenway sell for an average of nearly \$15,000 more than houses two miles from the trail; and

WHEREAS, the Silver Comet Trail Economic Impact Analysis and Planning Study concluded that, in its current state, the Silver Comet Trail in Georgia produces approximately \$120 million in total expenditures annually throughout the state, supporting approximately 1,300 jobs and earnings totaling \$37 million; and

WHEREAS, the Outdoor Industry Association released a study, The Outdoor Recreation Economy, finding that bicycling participants spend \$83 billion on bicycle tourism and generate \$97 billion in retail spending; and

WHEREAS, additionally, the findings concluded that bicycle recreation spending contributes to the creation of 848,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis included outdoor recreation for the first time in its 2018 study, estimating the economic output of outdoor recreation to be \$734 billion, surpassing multiple industries such as agriculture, petroleum and coal, and computer and electronic products; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates bicycling contributes to \$96 million in annual retail sales; and

WHEREAS, in a recent study, the Active Transportation Transforms America estimated an economic value of \$34 billion with active transportation infrastructure in its current state, based on the economic value derived from trails from retail sales, tourism, the increase in property value, and the attraction from companies desiring to do business in these up-and-coming areas; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define active transportation as any human-powered means of transportation, such as walking or bicycling, and link physical inactivity to the steady rise in rates of chronic health conditions in the United States such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and strokes; and

WHEREAS, trails provide affordable exercise and recreation opportunities within the community and can aid in increasing the overall health of people in communities due to an increase in outdoor activities; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is one of the most beautiful places in the country, encompassing the mighty Mississippi River, countless lakes, and all of the magnificent wonders of nature right at our fingertips, and an increase in tourism would provide an economic increase to further beautify this great state; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's next big project, "DELTA TRAIL...On the Mississippi River", a bike and walking trail along the Mississippi River, will attract a huge amount of tourism to Northeast Louisiana and will be built along the levee, allowing people to see more of Louisiana in all of its facets throughout numerous parishes; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development shall provide information and make written recommendations on the creation of the DELTA TRAIL in Northeast Louisiana, beginning in Vidalia, Louisiana, and ending in East Carroll Parish in Lake Providence; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development's recommendations shall include the following:

- (1) Identification of bicycle tourism trail routes and the benefits of bicycle tourism trails.
- (2) Design criteria.
- (3) Estimated costs.
- (4) Ideas for stakeholder engagement.
- (5) Sustainability and best practices.
- (6) Challenges with bicycle planning and development.

WHEREAS, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development shall address objectives for the tourism trail routes that establish the criteria for route locations, maps routes, and connect existing bicycle, transit, rail, vehicle, and pedestrian networks with potential tourism trails; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development shall address objectives for fostering the development of safe bicycle tourism trails that establish the design criteria for various bikeway accommodations, provide guidance to identify or coordinate bikeway connections statewide, and provide guidance to identify costs associated with development of various bikeway accommodations; and

WHEREAS, the DELTA TRAIL will span approximately eighty miles long, with five rest areas along the way for campers, RVs, and vehicles to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, the trail will also include strategically placed benches and historical markers throughout Concordia, Tensas, Madison, and East Carroll parishes; and

WHEREAS, the DELTA TRAIL will be a tourist attraction that yields a large economic benefit for the state of Louisiana derived from retail sales and tourism, serve as an active transportation tool to aid in increasing the overall health of people in the communities, attract companies desiring to do business in these up-and-coming areas, and increase property values in Northeast Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development to study the feasibility of creating a bike and walking trail along the Mississippi River spanning approximately eighty miles, beginning in Vidalia, Louisiana, and ending in East Carroll Parish in Lake Providence and make recommendations in regards to the creation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, in consultation with the Department of Transportation and Development shall submit a written report to the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways, and Public Works detailing its findings and recommendations for the creation of a bike trail along the Mississippi River in Northeast Louisiana prior to March 1, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, office of tourism, and the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE