

2017 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 172

BY SENATORS WHITE AND HEWITT

TRANSPORTATION/DEV DEPT. Requests the Department of Transportation and Development, in consultation with other state agencies, to study construction or maintenance impacts, including channelization, dredging, and clearing and snagging activities, upon river basins and water transmission, and provide recommendations to establish, implement, and enforce floodplain management plans for each watershed in Louisiana.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Department of Transportation and Development, in consultation
3 with other state agencies, to study construction or maintenance impacts, including
4 channelization, dredging, and clearing and snagging activities, upon river basins and
5 water transmission, and provide recommendations to establish, implement, and
6 enforce floodplain management plans for each watershed in Louisiana.

7 WHEREAS, during the last eighteen months the state of Louisiana and its citizens
8 have experienced numerous major flooding events; and

9 WHEREAS, on February 5, 2016, President Obama declared a state of emergency
10 in seven Louisiana parishes affected by damage from thunderstorms and flooding from the
11 Mississippi River; and

12 WHEREAS, that declaration provided federal funds to supplement the state and local
13 response efforts in the areas affected by flooding between December 28, 2015, through
14 February 1, 2016; and

15 WHEREAS, on March 9, 2016, Governor Edwards declared a state of emergency in
16 response to a strong upper level storm that brought heavy rainfall, flash flooding, river
17 flooding, and damaging winds; and

18 WHEREAS, on March 13, 2016, President Obama declared a major disaster existed

1 in Louisiana and ordered federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the
2 area affected by severe storms and flooding that began on March 8, 2016; and

3 WHEREAS, thirty-seven parishes were listed under the federal major disaster
4 declaration; and

5 WHEREAS, in the March flooding event, more than twenty-one thousand
6 households had verified losses according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency
7 (FEMA) and another six thousand one hundred forty-three structures flooded, including
8 businesses, churches, and schools; and

9 WHEREAS, in August 2016, Louisiana experienced the worst natural disaster in the
10 country since Hurricane Sandy as a slow moving system produced up to 20 inches of rainfall
11 in some areas of the state, providing more than seven trillion gallons of new surface water;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, rivers rose rapidly and inundated homes, roads, and businesses within
14 hours, and more than a half dozen river gauges set new record highs, in some cases by as
15 much as six feet; and

16 WHEREAS, in the August flooding event, more than ninety-one thousand
17 households had verified losses according to FEMA; and

18 WHEREAS, the March and August flooding events combined to impact one hundred
19 ninety-three thousand families across fifty-six of the sixty-four parishes; and

20 WHEREAS, when the state and political subdivisions are contemplating a
21 construction or maintenance project that may impact a waterway, the entities must consider
22 the flooding impacts the project may have on the waterway, other local political
23 subdivisions, or other waterways, both upstream and downstream; and

24 WHEREAS, existing practices across varying levels of government do not provide
25 for comprehensive floodplain management that is necessary to properly address drainage
26 issues as land is developed; and

27 WHEREAS, one of the missions of the Department of Transportation and
28 Development is to manage the water resources of the state and to implement projects related
29 to statewide flood control.

30 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana

