

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 68

BY REPRESENTATIVE MCFARLAND AND SENATOR PEACOCK

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to study the feasibility of implementing a master logger certification program under the office of forestry in the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to be administered by the Louisiana Forestry Association.

WHEREAS, the primary responsibilities of the office of forestry are to: suppress timberland wildfires; promote sound forest management practices; disseminate information; facilitate educational programs; produce reforestation seedlings; enforce timber-related laws; investigate timber theft; and assist community urban forestry programs; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's forestlands cover forty-eight percent of the state's land area or 13.8 million acres; and

WHEREAS, this renewable resource provides the raw material for Louisiana's second largest manufacturing employer, the forest products industry, with over nine hundred firms in forty-five parishes directly employing over twenty-five thousand people and an additional eight thousand people are employed harvesting and transporting the resource; and

WHEREAS, with adequate protection, followed by appropriate and accepted forest management techniques, Louisiana's forests are available to serve our state, both rural and urban, not only on a sustained basis, but at an increased level of productivity; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the various interests and needs of so many land owners requires a balanced educational approach to encourage and promote sound forestry practices over such a vast area; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Forestry Association administers a Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Master Logger program to certify loggers as master loggers; and

WHEREAS, the SFI master logger program will provide the tools needed to keep our forests healthy and growing; and

WHEREAS, the program consists of a series of classes given over the span of two days that an individual must attend in order to become certified as a Louisiana Master Logger; and

WHEREAS, individuals are required to complete the core classes only once, but each certified logger must earn a minimum of six continuing education credits each year in order to maintain their certification; if a certified logger does not take the classes and is inactive for three years, they must start the certification process over with the core classes; and

WHEREAS, implementing the program under the direction of the office of forestry in the Department of Agriculture and Forestry allows the office of forestry to mandate that all logging contractors and foremen receive master logger certification training; and

WHEREAS, the department supports the Louisiana Forestry Association administering the program and the department believes that this program is a necessary and important tool that the office of forestry can use to make sure that all loggers and foremen are educated in the most up-to-date techniques to use when engaging in the harvest and transport of timber.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to study the feasibility of implementing a master logger certification program under the office of forestry in the Department of Agriculture and Forestry to be administered by the Louisiana Forestry Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture and Forestry report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature of Louisiana on or before February 1, 2018.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the Louisiana Forestry Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE