

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 88

BY REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE

WATER/RESOURCES: Urges and requests the commissioner of conservation to adopt any necessary rules and regulations to limit the withdrawal of groundwater by commercial or industrial facilities to five million gallons of groundwater per day

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the commissioner of conservation to adopt any necessary rules and
3 regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, by 2026, to limit
4 the withdrawal of groundwater by commercial or industrial facilities to five million
5 gallons of groundwater per day, and to monitor and enforce those rules.

6 WHEREAS, the people living in East Baton Rouge Parish are dependent on local
7 groundwater resources from the Southern Hills Aquifer for safe drinking water; and

8 WHEREAS, major industries in East Baton Rouge Parish also use these groundwater
9 resources for commercial purposes to secure jobs and economic growth for the region; and

10 WHEREAS, the main supplier of safe drinking water in East Baton Rouge Parish is
11 the Baton Rouge Water Company, a privately-owned utility regulated by the Louisiana
12 Public Service Commission; and

13 WHEREAS, as many as ninety thousand people in Ascension Parish also draw their
14 safe drinking water from groundwater in East Baton Rouge Parish through the Baton Rouge
15 Water Company's subsidiary, Ascension Water Company; and

16 WHEREAS, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), through numerous
17 scientific studies and models, has identified serious water-level declines and saltwater
18 intrusion in Baton Rouge aquifers; and

1 WHEREAS, the USGS has identified large groundwater withdrawals for public
2 supply and industrial use in East Baton Rouge Parish as the cause of water-level declines and
3 saltwater intrusion; and

4 WHEREAS, the USGS has stated that if groundwater withdrawals in Baton Rouge
5 continue into the future at historic rates, saltwater intrusion will continue to occur; and

6 WHEREAS, the office of conservation has stated in a previous report to the
7 legislature that without "publicly released plans for major groundwater pumpage reductions
8 from the users in East Baton Rouge" groundwater use rates at the "present level or along a
9 slightly upward trend seems a logical assumption, with all attendant consequences"; and

10 WHEREAS, the commissioner of conservation has the statutory authority to prevent
11 or alleviate damaging saltwater movement or water-level decline and loss of sustainability
12 in the state's aquifers and to determine areas of groundwater concern and designate critical
13 areas of groundwater concern; and

14 WHEREAS, groundwater sustainability is defined in law as the development and use
15 of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained for the present and future without
16 causing unacceptable environmental, economic, social, or health consequences; and

17 WHEREAS, the office of conservation has stated in a previous report to the
18 legislature that such "unacceptable effects on sustainability" already exist in East Baton
19 Rouge Parish; and

20 WHEREAS, without limiting the industrial withdrawal of groundwater from the
21 Southern Hills Aquifer, such "unacceptable effects on sustainability" and damaging saltwater
22 movement and water-level decline will continue.

23 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
24 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the commissioner of conservation to
25 adopt any necessary rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure
26 Act, by 2026, to limit the withdrawal of groundwater by any commercial or industrial facility
27 to five million gallons of groundwater per day, and to monitor and enforce those rules.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
29 commissioner of conservation.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 88 Engrossed

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Marcelle

Urges and requests the commissioner of conservation to adopt any necessary rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, by 2026, to limit the withdrawal of groundwater by commercial or industrial facilities to five million gallons of groundwater per day, and to monitor and enforce those rules.