

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 159

BY SENATOR CROWE

A RESOLUTION

To create and provide for the Lower Pearl River Basin Ecosystem Study Commission to study the conditions, needs, issues, and funding relative to the protection and preservation of the Lower Pearl River Basin and to recommend any action or legislation that the commission deems necessary or appropriate.

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has been endowed with natural beauty that draws countless sportsmen and tourists every year and should expend the necessary resources to preserve its most important sanctuaries; and

WHEREAS, the Lower Pearl River Basin is located in east-central and southwest Mississippi and in the southeastern part of Louisiana, and drains an area of seven hundred sixty square miles; and

WHEREAS, the basin contains one of the least-altered and pristine swamps in the United States of America, covering an area of over seventy thousand acres, and supports nearly one hundred and forty types of fish and forty species of freshwater mussels, making it one of the most species-rich river systems in the world; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to preserve this valued and treasured ecosystem, a comprehensive plan should be created and instituted that will provide the financial, political, and scientific resources necessary to keep the Lower Pearl River Basin ecosystem in its pristine and natural state and should be based on the latest scientific, biological, hydrological, and geological data; and

WHEREAS, the protection and use of this important resource will depend on such a comprehensive plan.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Lower Pearl River Basin Ecosystem Study Commission to study and make recommendations to the legislature and federal agencies on the development of a long-term comprehensive master plan to protect and preserve the Lower Pearl River Basin ecosystem.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission created shall consist of the following sixteen members:

- (1) Two members of the Senate appointed by the president, or their designees, one of whom shall serve as chairperson.
- (2) Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker or their designees.
- (3) The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, or his designee.
- (4) The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality, or her designee.
- (6) The president of Washington Parish, or his designee.
- (7) The president of St. Tammany Parish, or his designee.
- (8) Four residents of St. Tammany Parish, appointed by the legislators representing that parish.
- (9) Three residents of Washington Parish, appointed by the legislators representing that parish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such study should focus on the area of protection, the creation of an authority to manage the protection area, financing for the authority, long-term projects for the preservation and maintenance of the protection area, and any future needs of the protection area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the commission shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of their respective constituent organization.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission may conduct such meetings at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the event the commission makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made to the legislature no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2015 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

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**ENROLLED**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this commission shall terminate on April 13, 2015.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE