

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 152

BY REPRESENTATIVE BADON

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request that the Orleans Levee District and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation not reopen the Pontchartrain Beach to the public.

WHEREAS, Pontchartrain Beach is a fifteen acre site located on the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain in the city of New Orleans' Lakefront area, at the northern end of Elysian Fields Avenue; and

WHEREAS, as there are no natural beaches occurring along the southern shore of Lake Pontchartrain, Pontchartrain Beach was originally a brackish marsh and swampland which provided a habitat for fish, shellfish, muskrats, osprey, alligators, and other native flora and fauna; and

WHEREAS, in the 1830s, the swamp began to give way to human interests making Pontchartrain Beach a recreational area; and

WHEREAS, since the inception of the Orleans Levee District in 1890 it has been the owner of the property known as Pontchartrain Beach; and

WHEREAS, official Pontchartrain Beach construction began in the 1930s as a result of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Works Progress Administration" and the Orleans Levee District "Lakefront Improvement Project"; and

WHEREAS, in 1939, the Pontchartrain Beach Amusement Park was established and at its peak the park had features such as a swimming pool and a waterfront stage for live entertainment; and

WHEREAS, social and environmental factors led to the ultimate closure of Pontchartrain Beach in 1983 with the major contributors to the park's decline being poor water quality, gradual erosion, and hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, the beach reopened in the early 1990s, but in 2012, after two people drowned in six weeks the beach was closed to public access; and

WHEREAS, in certain areas of the lake near the beach there are blocks of concrete called groins that can be slippery from algae buildups and depressions in the lake bottom which is deeper near these structures because the wave action interacts with the rocks in the lake; and

WHEREAS, the Orleans Levee District recently approved signing a lease with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation that will allow the nonprofit to reopen the beach to the public in the near future; and

WHEREAS, the conditions in the lake that were there when the two drowning deaths occurred in 2012 still exist and as such opening the beach to the public once again will only put the public at risk.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request that the Orleans Levee District and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation not reopen the Pontchartrain Beach to the public.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES