SLS 19RS-2048 ORIGINAL

2019 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 121

BY SENATOR CLAITOR AND REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE

 $LEGIS\,POWERS/FUNCTIONS.\,\,Creates\,the\,Southern\,Hills\,Aquifer\,Protection\,Task\,Force.$

1	A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
2	To create the Southern Hills Aquifer Protection Task Force to study and make
3	recommendations with respect to preservation of the Southern Hills Aquifer and
4	protection of its water quality for future generations.
5	WHEREAS, the four hundred fifty thousand people living in East Baton Rouge
6	Parish are dependent on local groundwater resources from the Southern Hills Aquifer for
7	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 Public Service
12	Commission; and
13	WHEREAS, as many as ninety thousand people in Ascension Parish also draw their
14	safe drinking water from groundwater from East Baton Rouge Parish through the Baton
15	Rouge 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 into 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 chief financial officer of the Baton Rouge Water Company stated
11	in open testimony at a Public Service Commission hearing in 2013, that, "Our long-term
12	solution, obviously, is the treatment plant with water from the Mississippi."; and
13	WHEREAS, it is expected that the costs of such a transition from groundwater to
14	surface water will be borne by the customers of the Baton Rouge Water Company, which
15	are the people of East Baton Rouge Parish and Ascension Parish; and
16	WHEREAS, such a transition likely will entail a sacrifice of drinking water quality
17	and could result in costly and hazardous situations commonly associated with a change of
18	drinking water source, as seen in Flint, Michigan, and elsewhere; and
19	WHEREAS, the legislature affirms its desire to see all actions necessary be taken to
20	maintain groundwater as the main source of safe drinking water for the public in East Baton
21	Rouge Parish and surrounding parishes; and
22	WHEREAS, all interested parties must come together to reach a long-range
23	conclusion to preserve the Southern Hills Aquifer and protect its water quality for future
24	generations.
25	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana creates the
26	Southern Hills Aquifer Protection Task Force to study and make recommendations to the
27	legislature, the office of conservation, and the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation
28	Commission to preserve the Southern Hills Aquifer and protect its water quality for future
29	generations.
30	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force created shall consist of the

following members:

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(1) One member of the Senate, whose district is located at least partially within the		
Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District, appointed by the president and whom shall		
serve as chairperson.		
(2) One member of the House of Representatives, whose district is located at least		

- (2) One member of the House of Representatives, whose district is located at least partially within the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District, appointed by the speaker.
 - (3) The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources or his designee.
 - (4) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality or his designee.
 - (5) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.
 - (6) The commissioner of conservation or his designee.
 - (7) The public service commissioner representing District No. 2 or his designee.
 - (8) The public service commissioner representing District No. 3 or his designee.
- (9) The mayor-president of the city of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish or his designee.
- (10) The executive director of the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District or his designee.
 - (11) The president of the Baton Rouge Water Works Company or his designee.
 - (12) The president of the Louisiana Chemical Association or his designee.
- (13) The president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such study should focus on the preservation of the Southern Hills Aquifer and protection of its water quality for future generations.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force 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.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall make a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, rules, or policy, if any, to the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the commissioner of conservation, and the executive director of the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation District by February 1, 2021.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alan Miller.

DIGEST 2019 Regular Session

Claitor

SCR 121 Original

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