

Regular Session, 2005

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 51

BY REPRESENTATIVE DAMICO

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Environmental Quality to develop a Louisiana mercury action plan with the goals of continual reduction in the use of mercury, continual reductions in releases of mercury to the environment, and minimization of human exposure to mercury.

WHEREAS, mercury contamination is a significant problem statewide, nationally, and internationally; and

WHEREAS, mercury is a persistent and toxic pollutant that bio-accumulates in the environment; and

WHEREAS, consumption of mercury-contaminated fish poses a significant public health threat; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has numerous fish advisories, warning certain individuals against consuming fish from affected water bodies; and

WHEREAS, studies have documented that exposure to elevated levels of mercury in the environment has resulted in harm to wildlife that consume fish; and

WHEREAS, accidental mercury spills and releases have occurred throughout Louisiana, have proven costly to clean up, and have exposed Louisiana citizens to mercury emissions; and

WHEREAS, employees at health care facilities, educational and research institutions, and businesses have experienced exposures, and such institutions have incurred significant costs due to accidental mercury releases; and

WHEREAS, programs in several other states have demonstrated that removal of mercury-containing products from the waste stream prior to disposal is an effective way to reduce mercury releases to the environment; and

WHEREAS, the many uses of mercury, both current and historic, have increased the presence of mercury in the environment; and

WHEREAS, many current uses of mercury have feasible non-mercury alternatives; and

WHEREAS, a significant reduction in the amount of mercury released into the environment can be achieved without hindering economic development by encouraging the establishment of effective waste reduction, recycling, and management programs, and the use of non-mercury alternatives where feasible.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Environmental Quality to engage industry, the public, and other state agencies in the development of a mercury action plan for the state of Louisiana that includes resource allocation requirements with the goals of continual reduction in the use of mercury, continual reduction in releases of mercury to the environment, remediation of areas known to be contaminated with mercury, and minimization of human exposure to mercury through communication, management, research, collection, recycling, and disposal.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE