Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 48

BY REPRESENTATIVE GISCLAIR

HEALTH CARE: Urges and requests the Dept. of Health and Hospitals to investigate any health conditions suffered by responders to the Transocean Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and provide direction for the long-term health care of these individuals

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study and investigate health conditions that have impacted responders to the Transocean Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and provide the Louisiana Legislature with direction in assisting these individuals with long-term health care.

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2010, an explosion occurred aboard the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, operated by British Petroleum, in the Gulf of Mexico causing the oil rig to sink and subsequently producing the largest oil spill in United States history; and

WHEREAS, this oil rig explosion caused one of the worst environmental catastrophes in American history which resulted in significant air and water pollution effects; and

WHEREAS, offshore vessel crews, shoreline cleanup workers, and other early responders spent significant amounts of time on the water and are now facing long-term health problems as the result of their service in responding to this environmental catastrophe; and

WHEREAS, these oil spill responders were subjected to multiple substances and chemical mixtures, including raw and weathered crude oil, dispersants, and combustion by-products; and

WHEREAS, prior to assisting in the cleanup, British Petroleum assured many oil spill responders that respirators or other special protection was not necessary to protect them

against fumes from crude oil, strong hydrocarbon vapors, and chemical dispersants being sprayed in massive quantities on the oil slick; and

WHEREAS, many of the oil spill responders who worked to clean up and burn off oil in the Gulf in the months after the spill have filed claims for health problems allegedly linked to the cleanup, including headaches, nausea, and respiratory problems; and

WHEREAS, the National Institute of Health Sciences indicates that the oil and hazardous materials associated with the cleanup can be hazardous to human health because of the damage it can cause to the heart and lungs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health and Hospitals should identify the health conditions of affected responders through an adequate health assessment which should include but not be limited to dermal, respiratory, and heart-related issues; as well as long-term health effects such as, neurological and carcinogenic complications; and

WHEREAS, the investigation should focus on any chronic health effects in workers and consider the pollutants or contaminants to which the responders were exposed, the degree of exposure, and the responder's general health status.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Health and Hospitals to study and investigate health conditions that have impacted responders to the Transocean Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and provide the legislature with direction in assisting these individuals with long-term health care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Health and Hospitals shall submit a report of its findings to the House and Senate committees on health and welfare no later than August 15, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

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)]

Gisclair HCR No. 48

Urges and requests the Dept. of Health and Hospitals to investigate and identify health problems that have impacted responders to the Transocean Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion and provide the legislature with direction in assisting these individuals with long-term health care and to report its findings to the legislature before Aug. 15, 2012.