

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 115

BY REPRESENTATIVE ROBBY CARTER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the commissioner of conservation to study the effects of ground water withdrawals on the sustainability of the Southern Hills Aquifer System and on the water supplies of parishes currently relying on that ground water and to report those findings to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality.

WHEREAS, the Southern Hills Aquifer System is a system of several aquifers underlying the parishes of East and West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, East and West Feliciana, and St. Helena with ten of those north of a fault line that bisects East Baton Rouge Parish; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Hills Aquifer System is the major source of drinking water for ten parishes in and surrounding the Capital Area Region and there are numerous industrial facilities that withdraw potable water from the aquifer system for their industrial processes; and

WHEREAS, there has long been concern about the viability, sustainability, and health of the Southern Hills Aquifer System; even as long ago as the early 1960s, there were concerns about saltwater being drawn from the southern portions of the system below the fault line into the freshwater portions of the aquifer north of the fault line; and

WHEREAS, the concern about the sustainability of the aquifer system has been growing and has resulted in many activities, discussions, studies, and public hearings culminating in the July 2013 release by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) of their "Simulation of Groundwater Flow in the '1,500-foot' Sand and the '2,000-foot' Sand and Movement of Saltwater in the '2,000-foot' Sand of the Baton Rouge Area, Louisiana" report; and

WHEREAS, according to the abstract of that report, "Groundwater withdrawals have caused saltwater to encroach into freshwater-bearing aquifers beneath Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Groundwater investigations in the 1960s identified a freshwater-saltwater interface located at the Baton Rouge Fault, across which abrupt changes in water levels occur."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the commissioner of conservation to study the effects of the ground water withdrawals on the sustainability of the Southern Hills Aquifer System and on the water supplies and water levels, including the lowering of the water table, of parishes currently relying on that ground water and to report those findings to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality on or before March 1, 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of conservation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE