

2020 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 99

BY REPRESENTATIVES WHEAT, KERNER, AMEDEE, COX, DUBUISSON, EDMONDS, FREEMAN, FREIBERG, FRIEMAN, GAROFALO, ILLG, MCMAHEN, MINCEY, NELSON, NEWELL, ROBERT OWEN, PRESSLY, RISER, THOMAS, THOMPSON, AND WRIGHT

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate the Pontchartrain Conservancy, formerly known as the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, on thirty years of working towards environmental sustainability and stewardship of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin through scientific research, education, and advocacy.

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation was founded in 1989 by scientists and community leaders, in response to concerns voiced throughout the basin, to be the public's voice, dedicated to restoring and preserving the water quality, coastlines, and habitats of the entire Pontchartrain Basin; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization consisting of a board of directors representing Basin parishes and state regulatory agencies whose mission is to drive environmental sustainability and stewardship through scientific research, education, and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, the Pontchartrain Basin comprises over ten thousand square miles of land in southeast Louisiana and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin is one of the largest estuarine systems in the Gulf of Mexico containing over twenty-two essential habitats and encompassing both rural and urban land use in the most densely populated region in Louisiana, including metro New Orleans and the state capital, Baton Rouge; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin is the heart of the region's commercial and recreational fisheries and the center of southeastern Louisiana's unique cultural heritage, and the estuary's habitats provide important ecological, cultural, and economic benefits to the entire region; and

WHEREAS, estuaries and coastal waters provide essential habitat for seventy-five percent of America's commercial fish catch and eighty to ninety percent of the recreational fish catch while at the same time, estuaries protect landowners from floodwaters and act as storm buffers, guarding residential areas from hurricanes; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation's programs focus on improving water quality to improve Lake Pontchartrain, coastal restoration in the Pontchartrain Basin, and education of the public about the importance of the Pontchartrain Basin to the economic and environmental health of the region; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation is committed to studying, evaluating, and sharing data related to water quality conditions and health, and it has been instrumental in educating the public on water quality issues at both local and regional levels; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation's efforts were responsible for the removal of Lake Pontchartrain and eight other local water bodies from the Clean Water's Act, Section 303(d) Impaired Water Bodies List, allowing people to return to swimming and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana is facing a coastal land loss crisis, and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has contributed efforts towards coastal restoration, including the planting of over seventy-five thousand trees, the engineering behind the creation of new wetlands, and a six-hundred acre delta; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has deployed thirteen artificial reefs in the Pontchartrain Basin to help sustain and bolster oyster and other fisheries in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation reconstructed and restored the New Canal Lighthouse on Lakeshore Drive in New Orleans after it was severely damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, incorporating original wood from the 1890

lighthouse that stood on the site, and now operates as the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation New Canal Lighthouse Museum and Education Center; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation has elected to change its name to the Pontchartrain Conservancy to better reflect its mission, as it has developed and evolved over the past thirty years into an organization not only committed to restoring the Lake, but also the entire Pontchartrain Basin region.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate the Pontchartrain Conservancy, formerly the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, on thirty years of working towards environmental sustainability and stewardship of the Pontchartrain Basin through scientific research, education, and advocacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the executive director of the Pontchartrain Conservancy.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE