

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

BY SENATOR HEWITT

LEGIS POWERS/FUNCTIONS. Re-establishes the Lower Pearl River Basin Task Force.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To re-establish the Lower Pearl River Basin task force to study the conditions, needs, issues,
3 and funding relative to the flood protection and preservation of the Lower Pearl
4 River Basin and to recommend any action or legislation that the commission
5 determines is necessary or appropriate.

6 WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has been endowed with natural beauty that draws
7 countless sportsmen and tourists every year and should expend the necessary resources to
8 preserve its most important sanctuaries; and

9 WHEREAS, the Lower Pearl River Basin is located in the southeastern part of
10 Louisiana and in east-central and southwest Mississippi, and drains an area of seven hundred
11 sixty square miles; and

12 WHEREAS, the basin contains one of the least-altered and pristine swamps in the
13 United States of America, covering an area of over seventy thousand acres, and supports
14 nearly one hundred forty types of fish and forty species of freshwater mussels, making it one
15 of the most species-rich river systems in the world; and

16 WHEREAS, in an effort to preserve this valued and treasured ecosystem, a
17 comprehensive plan should be created and instituted that will provide the financial, political,
18 and scientific resources necessary to keep the Lower Pearl River Basin ecosystem in its

1 pristine and natural state and should be based on the latest scientific, biological,
2 hydrological, and geological data; and

3 WHEREAS, areas adjacent to the Pearl River and its tributaries have experienced a
4 higher frequency of flooding in recent years; and

5 WHEREAS, activities in the state of Mississippi with regard to the portion of the
6 Pearl River within its borders may affect the flow and level of the river in Louisiana; and

7 WHEREAS, the flood protection and efficient use of this important resource will
8 depend on a comprehensive plan.

9 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
10 does hereby re-establish the Lower Pearl River Basin Task Force to study and make
11 recommendations to the legislature and federal agencies on the development of a long-term
12 comprehensive master plan to address flood control and drainage issues, while preserving
13 the Lower Pearl River Basin ecosystem.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force created shall consist of the
15 following nine members:

16 (1) One member appointed by the president of the Senate, who shall serve as
17 chairperson.

18 (2) One member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

19 (3) The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, or his designee.

20 (4) The secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, or his designee.

21 (5) The secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality, or his designee.

22 (6) The secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, or his
23 designee.

24 (7) The executive director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, or his
25 designee.

26 (8) The parish president of Washington Parish, or his designee.

27 (9) The parish president of St. Tammany Parish, or his designee.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study should focus on the area of protection,
29 riverine flooding, drainage, the potential creation of an authority to manage the area,
30 financing for such an authority, long-term projects for the preservation and maintenance of

1 the area, and any future needs of the area.

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

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may conduct meetings at times
6 as it may determine are necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively
7 its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this Resolution.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consider the feasibility of
9 creating a multi-state compact with the state of Mississippi, a development district, or
10 management authority within the state of Louisiana.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall make a report of its findings
12 and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, to the Senate
13 Committee on Natural Resource, the Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and
14 Public Works, the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, and the House
15 Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, by July 1, 2025, and upon
16 submission of the report, the task force shall cease to exist.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jacob K. Wilson.

	DIGEST	
SR 142 Original	2023 Regular Session	Hewitt

Re-establishes the Lower Pearl River Basin Task Force to study the conditions, needs, issues, and funding relative to the flood protection and preservation of the Lower Pearl River Basin and to recommend any action or legislation that the commission considers necessary or appropriate.

Task force to consist of the following nine members:

- (1) One member appointed by the president of the Senate, who shall serve as chairperson.
- (2) One member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) The secretary of DNR, or his designee.
- (4) The secretary of the DW&F, or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the DEQ, or his designee.
- (6) The secretary of the DOTD, or his designee.

- (7) The executive director of CPRA, or his designee.
- (8) The parish president of Washington Parish, or his designee.
- (9) The parish president of St. Tammany Parish, or his designee.

Requires that the task force submit a report and recommendations with suggestions for proposed legislation to the Senate and House committees on transportation, highways and public works, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, and the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment by 7/1/25.

Provides that the task force terminates upon submission of its report of findings and recommendations.