

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 259

BY REPRESENTATIVES DUBUISSON AND GAROFALO

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to collaborate with the St. Tammany Parish administration, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Bayou Liberty Association to identify solutions for the regulation of airboats on Bayou Liberty.

WHEREAS, Bayou Liberty is a narrow, serene waterway in St. Tammany Parish lined with private property and homes; and

WHEREAS, the bayou is part of the Louisiana Natural and Scenic Rivers Program, which means that its free-flowing condition and shorelines covered by natural vegetation are subject to special restrictions in place to preserve, protect, and enhance its natural qualities; and

WHEREAS, for several years tourists visiting the area have been bringing in and using airboats on Bayou Liberty in a manner that threatens the natural tranquility and scenic and aesthetic qualities of the bayou and causes problems for the residents along the bayou; and

WHEREAS, airboats are powered by an elevated, high horsepower motor with a large air propeller that makes them much louder than traditional boat motors; and

WHEREAS, in addition to noise pollution these airboats are not easily maneuverable and can be destructive to the marsh; and

WHEREAS, the St. Tammany Parish council has passed ordinances to regulate the speed of airboats and the distance they must keep from public structures and private residences; and

WHEREAS, there is also an ordinance prohibiting unreasonably loud and intrusive noises; and

WHEREAS, when law enforcement is contacted, they are often unable to arrive at the scene in time to enforce such laws; and

WHEREAS, these local ordinances have not proven effective at regulating the use of airboats on the bayou; and

WHEREAS, the state retains the exclusive authority to prohibit airboats on navigable waterways; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, in its capacity as the steward of scenic rivers, wildlife, and fisheries and as a law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over navigational matters and boating safety, as well as local law enforcement agencies, local government agencies, and local advocates all have a stake in these matters and should work together to find solutions.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to collaborate with the St. Tammany Parish administration, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office, and the Bayou Liberty Association to identify solutions for the regulation of airboats on Bayou Liberty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the St. Tammany Parish President, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff, and the president of the Bayou Liberty Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES