

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 54

BY REPRESENTATIVES DESHOTEL, EGAN, FISHER, AND JACKSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct a comprehensive review to assess the health and environmental impacts of chlorine levels in public water systems.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health currently mandates that administrators of public water systems in the state add elevated levels of disinfectants, such as chlorine, to drinking water supplies resulting in the formation of potentially harmful chemical byproducts; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, in response to public concern about harmful microorganisms in drinking water, the Louisiana Department of Health issued an emergency rule increasing the minimum required chlorine concentration in public water systems to 0.5 parts per million, a level five times higher than the previous legal minimum and more than twice the concentration recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency; and

WHEREAS, despite the emergency nature of this rule, the Louisiana Department of Health has not revised or reduced the elevated chlorine requirement in over a decade; and

WHEREAS, the long-term health impacts of elevated chlorine levels in public water systems remain insufficiently studied, but emerging scientific research suggests that excessive chlorine can contribute to the formation of carcinogenic byproducts known as trihalomethanes (THMs); and

WHEREAS, THMs are produced when chlorine interacts with naturally occurring organic matter during the water disinfection process; and

WHEREAS, epidemiological studies have linked prolonged exposure to THMs with an increased risk of certain cancers, including bladder cancer; and

WHEREAS, the increased use of chlorine, intended to meet regulatory compliance, has resulted in higher concentrations of THMs, which may pose long-term health risks to Louisiana residents; and

WHEREAS, in order to meet the statewide minimum chlorine requirement, local water authorities are often forced to increase chlorine levels system-wide, leading to greater THM formation and compounding the potential health hazards; and

WHEREAS, there is a distinction between the treatment needs of surface water and ground water such that surface water may need more disinfecting chemicals, such as chlorine, than is required for ground water, which has low amounts of microbials and contaminants; and

WHEREAS, in addition to public health concerns, the elevated chlorine requirements place a significant financial burden on small and under-resourced local water systems, many of which already face infrastructure and funding challenges.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to review and revise its regulations regarding minimum chlorine concentration levels in public water systems with the goal of aligning those requirements with current scientific evidence and federal recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to consult with independent scientists, environmental health experts, and local water authorities in developing updated disinfection guidelines that maintain microbial safety while minimizing adverse health and economic impacts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the governor, surgeon general of this state, and secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE