

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

BY REPRESENTATIVE FOIL

WATER/RESOURCES: Urges the commissioner of conservation to evaluate the appropriateness of restrictions on withdrawals from the Southern Hills Aquifer System

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the commissioner of conservation to evaluate the efficacy and
3 appropriateness of imposing limitations on the amount of withdrawals from the
4 Southern Hills Aquifer System.

5 WHEREAS, the Southern Hills Aquifer System underlies the parishes of East and
6 West Baton Rouge, East and West Feliciana, and Livingston and is the major source of
7 drinking water for the Capital Area Region; and

8 WHEREAS, not only does the Southern Hills Aquifer System provide drinking water
9 for the Capital Area Region, there are numerous industrial facilities that withdraw potable
10 water from the aquifer system for their industrial processes; and

11 WHEREAS, there has long been concern about the viability, sustainability, and
12 health of the Southern Hills Aquifer System; even as long ago as the early 1960s there were
13 concerns about saltwater intrusion into the aquifer; and

14 WHEREAS, the concern about the sustainability of the aquifer system has been
15 growing recently and has resulted in many activities, discussions, studies, and public
16 hearings including a groundwater awareness survey conducted in the Baton Rouge area in
17 December of 2012 to try to determine just how well versed Baton Rouge residents were
18 about their drinking water and where it came from; and

1 WHEREAS, among the findings of the survey was that only a little over half of the
2 people surveyed knew that their drinking water came from the Southern Hills Aquifer
3 System; and

4 WHEREAS, the office of conservation and the Capital Area Groundwater
5 Conservation Commission, using the United States Geological Survey Water Resources
6 research and data, have worked together to study the Southern Hills Aquifer System and to
7 develop management regimes and policies that are conducive to the sustainability of the
8 aquifer system and to minimize the effects of saltwater intrusion into the system; and

9 WHEREAS, in the spring of 2012, the office of conservation, at the request of the
10 Capital Area Groundwater Conservation Commission and the Baton Rouge area legislative
11 delegation, held public hearings on the issue of saltwater encroachment in the fifteen
12 hundred foot sands and two thousand foot sands of the Southern Hills Aquifer System, where
13 information was provided that supported the fears that the aquifer system is not sustainable
14 due to the saltwater encroachment which resulted in the commissioner of conservation taking
15 action to have certain groundwater well owners provide information as to their current and
16 projected withdrawal volume; and

17 WHEREAS, even with all the focus and increased activity towards protection and
18 conservation of the Southern Hills Aquifer System, particularly as a drinking water source,
19 there remains concern about the sustainability of the aquifer system and a desire to see
20 implementation by the commissioner of conservation of withdrawal restrictions throughout
21 the Southern Hills Aquifer System in order to preserve the necessary drinking water for the
22 population of the Capital Area Region.

23 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
24 urge and request the commissioner of conservation to evaluate the efficacy and
25 appropriateness of imposing limitations on the amount of withdrawals from the Southern
26 Hills Aquifer System.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commissioner of conservation report his
28 findings and determinations to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment
29 and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than March 1, 2015.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the
2 commissioner of conservation.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HCR No. 52

Urges and requests the commissioner of conservation to evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of imposing limitations on the amount of withdrawals from the Southern Hills Aquifer System.

Requires the commissioner of conservation to issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than March 1, 2015.