

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 54

BY REPRESENTATIVE ST. GERMAIN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the office of conservation to study the effect of implementing certain requirements for operators of salt dome caverns.

WHEREAS, there are currently twenty-eight salt domes in the state of Louisiana with permitted activities of brine production and storage cavern formation and operation with twenty-six of those salt domes located in South Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, prior to August 2012, most residents of Louisiana had no idea whether or not they were living or working near a salt dome or if any of the salt domes located near their homes or jobs were being used for brine production or for storage of oil or gas or produced water or other materials associated with oil and gas production in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2012, after many months of unexplained bubbling in and along the bayou, a sink hole unexpectedly opened up in the swamps near Bayou Corne in Assumption Parish, calling the attention of the entire country to the possibility of a salt dome cavern collapse; and

WHEREAS, after the collapse of the cavern located in the Napoleonville salt dome, more than three hundred people were evacuated from one hundred fifty homes in the Bayou Corne community along LA Highway 70 due to the presence of methane, hydrogen sulfide, and other toxic gases associated with the production and exploration of hydrocarbons; and

WHEREAS, in response to the disaster in Bayou Corne, the state office of conservation and the Legislature of Louisiana proposed and implemented reporting and safety measures designed to minimize the possibility of such an event reoccurring or occurring elsewhere in the state and to ensure public awareness and knowledge of the location of salt domes being used for brine production and for the storage of materials related to oil and gas exploration and production; and

WHEREAS, there is still some concern, particularly among the still-evacuated residents of Bayou Corne, that not enough has been done to protect the public from similar fates and those residents are still hoping that the office of conservation will implement tighter restrictions on the use of salt domes for brine production and for storage, including such requirements as public disclosure of such caverns by a sign located at the site of the cavern or facility; an expanded buffer zone of five hundred feet surrounding the facility; scheduling public meetings at the request of twenty or more citizens residing within two thousand feet of a facility; submission by the owner of the facility to the office of conservation of a security plan for response to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and accidents or equipment malfunctions; and requirements for bonds and insurance by the owners and operators of such facilities at sufficient levels to secure the interests of the businesses and residents in the area around such facilities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the office of conservation to study the potential effect of implementing the above-listed requirements for operators of salt dome caverns and the benefit to be gained from the implementation of such requirements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of conservation report their findings to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than March 1, 2015.

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

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE