

2018 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 95

BY SENATOR ALLAIN

FISH/FISHING. Requests the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to develop a proposal seeking Open Ocean TIG and RW TIG funds to monitor red snapper and other reef fish impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Department
3 of Wildlife and Fisheries to develop and submit a proposal seeking Open Ocean
4 Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) and Region-wide (RW) TIG funds to monitor
5 red snapper and other reef fish impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

6 WHEREAS, red snapper and other reef fish are vital to the Gulf of Mexico
7 ecosystem and are integral to both recreation and commerce in the Gulf of Mexico; and

8 WHEREAS, red snapper and other reef fish are among the most valuable fish in the
9 Gulf of Mexico and are immensely important to both recreational and commercial fishermen
10 in the Gulf of Mexico; and

11 WHEREAS, the number of allowable recreational fishing days in federal waters for
12 red snapper have been consistently reduced year-after-year; and

13 WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the abundance and biomass of red snapper off of
14 Louisiana's coast is high enough to sustain a substantial increase in harvest, but a more
15 robust and comprehensive evaluation of red snapper is warranted to more accurately
16 understand the health of the species; and

17 WHEREAS, a number of other reef fish species also occur within these same habitats
18 off of Louisiana, but data on the abundance, biomass, and health of those reef fish species

1 is not well known; and

2 WHEREAS, the United States Congress appropriated \$10,000,000 to better
3 understand the health of red snapper in the entire Gulf of Mexico through surveying and
4 assessing populations on and aggregated near marine structures, including offshore oil and
5 gas platforms, artificial reefs, and structures created in the Gulf of Mexico, as well as
6 naturally occurring reefs and rock structures; and

7 WHEREAS, this congressional funding was awarded to the Mississippi-Alabama Sea
8 Grant Consortium that has developed a substantial and scientifically sound study utilizing
9 habitat mapping, high reward tagging, direct counts, and depletion fishing methods, but is
10 insufficient for Louisiana; and

11 WHEREAS, this congressionally funded study is likely to be insufficient for
12 Louisiana due to the lack of existing habitat data, the variable water clarity, and the presence
13 of hypoxia off of Louisiana's coast; and

14 WHEREAS, additional habitat information and enhanced data collections are
15 necessary to fully understand the abundance, biomass, and health of red snapper and reef fish
16 and will directly benefit Louisiana's ability to generate an accurate estimate of red snapper
17 abundance and biomass off the Louisiana coast; and

18 WHEREAS, the data collected will advance our understanding of the status and
19 trends of key water column resources and habitats encountered during the study; and

20 WHEREAS, there are Deepwater Horizon (DWH) Natural Resource Damage (NRD)
21 Open Ocean TIG and RW TIG funds that are most appropriate for these Gulf of Mexico
22 restoration activities of monitoring red snapper and other reef fish impacted by the DWH oil
23 spill.

24 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
25 urge and request the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Department of
26 Wildlife and Fisheries to develop and submit a proposal seeking Open Ocean TIG and RW
27 TIG funds to monitor red snapper and other reef fish impacted by the Deepwater Horizon
28 oil spill.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in addition to seeking DWH NRD funds,
30 Louisiana will endeavor to dedicate funding of its own from the Artificial Reef Development

1 Fund, the Saltwater Fish Research and Conservation Fund, and Sport Fish Restoration funds
2 to supplement the DWH NRD funds and the congressionally funded study.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to all
4 DWH Trustees overseeing the use of the Open Ocean TIG and RW TIG funds and to each
5 member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Alan Miller.

DIGEST

SCR 95 Original

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Requests CPRA and DWF to develop a proposal seeking Open Ocean TIG and RW TIG funds to monitor red snapper and other reef fish impacted by the DWH oil spill.