HLS 18RS-4347 ORIGINAL

2018 Regular Session

1

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 205

BY REPRESENTATIVE JIMMY HARRIS

SEWERAGE/N O WATER BD: Requests the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to establish new billing policies and procedures

A RESOLUTION

2	To urge and request the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to review its current
3	billing policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage services and to take
4	all necessary steps to establish new policies and procedures that provide for a more
5	efficient and accurate billing system.
6	WHEREAS, Act No. 6 of the 1899 Extraordinary Session of the Louisiana
7	Legislature created the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to furnish, construct,
8	operate, and maintain a water treatment and distribution system and a sanitary sewerage
9	system for the city of New Orleans; and
10	WHEREAS, in 1903, the Drainage Commission of the city of New Orleans was
11	merged with the Sewerage and Water Board in order to consolidate drainage, water, and
12	sewerage programs under one agency for more efficient operations; and
13	WHEREAS, over the last one hundred fifteen years the Sewerage and Water Board
14	has funded sewerage, water, and drainage services primarily through local property taxes and
15	user fees; and
16	WHEREAS, throughout the years, as costs associated with providing adequate
17	sewerage, water, and drainage services to the city's residents has continued to escalate, the
18	Sewerage and Water Board has continued to increase user fees; and
19	WHEREAS, although the city's residents understand the need to increase user fees
20	to generate sufficient revenue for necessary infrastructure improvements, many recently

1	began to question the billing policies and procedures of the Sewerage and Water Board as
2	they were repeatedly receiving erroneous water bills; and
3	WHEREAS, on May 8, 2018, the Sewerage and Water Board announced its plan to
4	implement a new billing system to address customer complaints about high water bills; and
5	WHEREAS, after the implementation of the new billing system the city's residents
6	have found more errors in their water bills, and the staff of the Sewerage and Water Board
7	has been slow to respond to their complaints; and
8	WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Sewerage and Water Board establish new billing
9	policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage services to provide for a more
10	efficient and accurate billing system, and such policies and procedures should include rules
11	authorizing the adjusting, releasing, or extinguishing of any indebtedness from a customer's
12	sewerage and water bill as provided in R.S. 33:4071(F); and
13	WHEREAS, the new billing policies and procedures should also address the
14	following: discounts for elderly, disabled, and low-income customers; eliminate arbitrary
15	estimate billing; improving customer service, public outreach, and overall communication,
16	including holding community meetings and written notification of rate increases at least
17	ninety days prior to an increase; and
18	WHEREAS, the Sewerage and Water Board should provide a written report on the
19	status of billing policies and procedures to the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial
20	and Cultural Affairs on a quarterly basis.
21	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
22	Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the New Orleans Sewerage and Water
23	Board to review its current billing policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage
24	services and to take all necessary steps to establish new policies and procedures that provide
25	for a more efficient and accurate billing system.
26	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
27	executive director of the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board.

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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)]

HR 205 Original

2018 Regular Session

Jimmy Harris

Requests the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to review its current billing policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage services and to take all necessary steps to establish new policies and procedures that provide for a more efficient and accurate billing system.