

2019 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 170

BY SENATOR THOMPSON

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

GOVERNOR. Creates the Rural Water Infrastructure Committee within the governor's office. (gov sig)

AN ACT

To enact R.S. 36:4(BB) and Part VII of Chapter 2 of Title 49 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 49:220.31 through 220.33, relative to rural water systems; to create the Rural Water Infrastructure Committee within the office of the governor; to provide for membership of the committee; to provide relative to terms, quorum requirements, and per diem; to provide for the functions of the committee; to require the committee to make recommendations; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 36:4(BB) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§4. Structure of executive branch of state government

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BB. The Rural Water Infrastructure Committee (R.S. 49:220.31 et seq.) is hereby placed within the office of the governor and shall perform its powers, duties, and functions as provided by law.

Section 2. Part VII of Chapter 2 of Title 49 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 49:220.31 through 220.33, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

1 **PART VII. RURAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

2 **§220.31. Purpose**

3 **The state of Louisiana recognizes the need to develop and implement a**
4 **comprehensive rural water infrastructure plan to address deteriorating public**
5 **water supply systems and protect the interests, health, safety, and welfare of the**
6 **citizens of Louisiana. This effort will require the cooperation and participation**
7 **of numerous federal, state, and local agencies. To further the development of the**
8 **plan, the state of Louisiana recognizes the necessity to establish the Rural Water**
9 **Infrastructure Committee for the purpose of providing advice and guidance to**
10 **the governor on all matters relative to rural water systems in Louisiana.**

11 **§220.32. Rural Water Infrastructure Committee; creation and organization**

12 **A. The Rural Water Infrastructure Committee is hereby created within**
13 **the office of the governor and shall be composed of fifteen members as follows:**

14 **(1) The State Director of United States Department of Agriculture Rural**
15 **Development in Louisiana or his designee.**

16 **(2) The State Director of the United States Economic Development**
17 **Administration or his designee.**

18 **(3) The governor or his designee.**

19 **(4) The governor's designee to the Delta Regional Authority.**

20 **(5) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.**

21 **(6) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality**
22 **or his designee.**

23 **(7) The executive director of the Louisiana Office of Community**
24 **Development or his designee.**

25 **(8) The director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and**
26 **Emergency Preparedness or his designee.**

27 **(9) The executive director of the Louisiana Rural Water Association or**
28 **his designee.**

29 **(10) The executive director of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana**

1 or his designee.

2 (11) The executive director of the Louisiana Municipal Association or his
3 designee.

4 (12) The president of the Louisiana Association of Planning and
5 Development Districts or his designee.

6 (13) The president of the Senate or his designee.

7 (14) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.

8 (15) The chairman of the Louisiana Rural Caucus or a member of the
9 Louisiana Rural Caucus designated by the chairman.

10 B. Members shall serve terms concurrent with the governor.

11 C. The governor's designee to the Delta Regional Authority shall serve
12 as chairman and shall develop procedures for the operation of the committee.

13 D. The committee shall meet as necessary at the call of the chairman. A
14 majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the
15 transaction of business.

16 E. All official actions of the committee shall require the affirmative vote
17 of a majority of the members in attendance.

18 F. The governor or the chairman of the committee may request
19 employees of federal, state, or local agencies involved with rural water systems
20 to participate as nonvoting members of the committee.

21 G. The committee may request administrative and technical support
22 from the governor's office to carry out the committee's functions and
23 responsibilities as provided in this Part.

24 H. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation.
25 Legislative members of the committee shall receive such per diem and expenses
26 as provided for legislators during attendance at legislative committees and from
27 the same source.

28 I. The names of the members who will serve on the committee shall be
29 submitted to the governor not later than August 15, 2019.

1 **§220.33. Functions; recommendations**

2 **A. The committee shall have the following functions and duties:**

3 **(1) To advise the governor on all matters relative to rural water systems**
4 **in Louisiana.**

5 **(2) To advise and provide technical assistance to rural water systems,**
6 **local governments, and nonprofit organizations to improve infrastructure and**
7 **ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.**

8 **(3) To work collaboratively to assess and prioritize rural water system**
9 **deficiencies.**

10 **(4) To offer emergency response assessments for rural water systems**
11 **during public health emergencies upon request.**

12 **(5) To foster cooperation among federal, state, and local governmental**
13 **agencies on all issues pertaining to rural water systems.**

14 **(6) To conduct such studies as are necessary to develop and implement**
15 **a comprehensive rural water infrastructure plan.**

16 **(7) To create a clearinghouse of educational materials to assist rural**
17 **water systems, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.**

18 **(8) To review programs, conditions, trends, and engineering findings**
19 **which affect rural water systems in order to make recommendations for**
20 **improvements.**

21 **(9) To assist in the identification of potential sources of funding for rural**
22 **water systems and to develop advice with respect to which expenditures are in**
23 **the best interest of the state.**

24 **B. The committee shall advise and make recommendations to the**
25 **governor on the following:**

26 **(1) Establishing funding criteria for rural water systems.**

27 **(2) Establishing a process to hold noncompliant water systems**
28 **accountable including legislative audits and mandatory management training.**

29 **(3) Increasing inspection and enforcement of rural water systems by**

- (6) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality or his designee.
- (7) The executive director of the Louisiana Office of Community Development or his designee.
- (8) The director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness or his designee.
- (9) The executive director of the Louisiana Rural Water Association or his designee.
- (10) The executive director of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana or his designee.
- (11) The executive director of the Louisiana Municipal Association or his designee.
- (12) The president of the Louisiana Association of Planning and Development Districts or his designee.
- (13) The president of the Senate or his designee.
- (14) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (15) The chairman of the Louisiana Rural Caucus or a member of the Louisiana Rural Caucus designated by the chairman.

Proposed law provides that members will serve terms concurrent with the governor. Provides that the governor's designee to the Delta Regional Authority will serve as chairman and develop procedures for the operation of the committee.

Proposed law provides that committee members will serve without compensation and authorizes legislative members of the committee to receive the same per diem and travel allowance for attending meetings of the committee as is normally provided for meetings of legislative committees.

Proposed law authorizes the governor or the chairman of the committee to request employees of federal, state, or local agencies involved with rural water systems to participate as nonvoting members of the committee.

Proposed law authorizes the committee to request administrative and technical support from the governor's office.

Proposed law requires the names of the members who will serve on the committee to be submitted to the governor not later than August 15, 2019.

Proposed law requires the committee to perform the following functions and duties:

- (1) To advise the governor on all matters relative to rural water systems in Louisiana.
- (2) To advise and provide technical assistance to rural water systems, local governments, and nonprofit organizations to improve infrastructure and ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.
- (3) To work collaboratively to assess and prioritize rural water system deficiencies.
- (4) To offer emergency response assessments for rural water systems during public health emergencies upon request.
- (5) To foster cooperation among federal, state, and local governmental agencies on all issues pertaining to rural water systems.

- (6) To conduct such studies as are necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive rural water infrastructure plan.
- (7) To create a clearinghouse of educational materials to assist rural water systems, local governments, and nonprofit organizations.
- (8) To review programs, conditions, trends, and engineering findings which affect rural water systems in order to make recommendations for improvements.
- (9) To assist in the identification of potential sources of funding for rural water systems and to develop advice with respect to which expenditures are in the best interest of the state.

Proposed law further requires the committee to advise and make recommendations to the governor on the following:

- (1) Establishing funding criteria for rural water systems.
- (2) Establishing a process to hold noncompliant water systems accountable including legislative audits and mandatory management training.
- (3) Increasing inspection and enforcement of rural water systems by state agencies.
- (4) Establishing a system for the review of engineering proposals for infrastructure upgrades to rural water systems.
- (5) Developing financial incentives for rural water systems to consolidate when deemed appropriate.
- (6) Developing recommendations for legislative action relative to rural water systems.

Proposed law requires the committee to submit a written report to the governor by March first of each year relative to the progress, challenges, and recommendations concerning policy and possible legislation relative to rural water systems.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 36:4(BB) and R.S. 49:220.31-220.33)