

1 WHEREAS, the USGS has identified large groundwater withdrawals for public
2 supply and industrial use in East Baton Rouge Parish as the cause of water level declines and
3 saltwater intrusion; and

4 WHEREAS, the USGS has stated that if groundwater withdrawals in Baton Rouge
5 continue into the future at historic rates, saltwater intrusion will continue to occur; and

6 WHEREAS, the office of conservation has stated in a previous report to the
7 legislature that without "publicly released plans for major groundwater pumpage reductions
8 from the users in East Baton Rouge" groundwater use rates at the "present level or along a
9 slightly upward trend seems a logical assumption, with all attendant consequences"; and

10 WHEREAS, the chief financial officer of the Baton Rouge Water Company stated
11 in open testimony at a Louisiana Public Service Commission hearing in 2013 that, "Our
12 long-term solution, obviously, is the treatment plant with water from the Mississippi"; and

13 WHEREAS, it is expected that the costs of such a transition from groundwater to
14 surface water will be borne by the customers of the Baton Rouge Water Company, which
15 are the people of East Baton Rouge Parish and Ascension Parish; and

16 WHEREAS, such a transition likely will entail a sacrifice of drinking water quality
17 and could result in costly and hazardous situations commonly associated with a change of
18 drinking water source, as seen in Flint, Michigan, and elsewhere; and

19 WHEREAS, the legislature affirms its desire to see all actions necessary be taken to
20 maintain groundwater as the main source of safe drinking water for the public in East Baton
21 Rouge Parish and surrounding parishes; and

22 WHEREAS, the Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission (CAGWCC)
23 is charged with the regional management of groundwater resources in the Baton Rouge area;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, since its creation in 1974, the CAGWCC has never adopted a
26 comprehensive management plan for local groundwater resources; and

27 WHEREAS, the commissioner of conservation has the statutory authority to prevent
28 or alleviate damaging saltwater movement or water level decline and loss of sustainability
29 in the state's aquifers and to determine areas of groundwater concern and designate critical
30 areas of groundwater concern; and

1 WHEREAS, groundwater sustainability is defined in law as the development and use
2 of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained for the present and future time without
3 causing unacceptable environmental, economic, social, or health consequences; and

4 WHEREAS, the office of conservation has stated in a previous report to the
5 legislature that such "unacceptable effects on sustainability" already exist in East Baton
6 Rouge Parish; and

7 WHEREAS, the CAGWCC is mandated by R.S. 38:3076 to work in conjunction with
8 the commissioner of conservation in his responsibilities.

9 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
10 urge and request the commissioner of conservation to study, outline the requirements, and
11 make recommendations as to the necessity of an area of groundwater concern or a critical
12 area of groundwater concern declaration in the Baton Rouge area to limit saltwater intrusion
13 and protect regional groundwater supplies for the future.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study shall include recommendations that
15 provide for the role and necessary actions required of the Capital Area Ground Water
16 Conservation Commission in any plan to preserve and manage the groundwater resources
17 of the Baton Rouge area.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commissioner of conservation shall submit
19 a report of the study no later than February 15, 2020, to the governor, the House Committee
20 on Natural Resources and Environment, the House Committee on Municipal, Parochial and
21 Cultural Affairs, the House Committee on Health and Welfare, the Senate Committee on
22 Environmental Quality, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, the Senate Committee
23 on Local and Municipal Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
25 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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Marcelle

Urges and requests the commissioner of conservation to study and outline the requirements, and make recommendations as to the necessity of an area of groundwater concern or a critical area of groundwater concern declaration in the Baton Rouge area and to submit a report of the study to the governor and oversight committees no later than Feb. 15, 2020.