

2019 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 124

BY SENATOR LAMBERT

WATER/WATERWAYS. Requests the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to consider additional water diversion projects in addition to the Bonnet Carre' and Morganza Spillways to address high water issues on the Mississippi River.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the United States Army Corps of Engineers to consider additional water
3 diversion projects to help manage high water issues on the Mississippi River in
4 addition to the large scale water diversion projects such as the Bonnet Carré and
5 Morganza spillways.

6 WHEREAS, May 28, 2019, marked the one hundred forty-fourth consecutive day
7 with the Mississippi River in Baton Rouge at or above flood stage, breaking the record
8 established during the Great Flood of 1927; and

9 WHEREAS, the 1927 flood was the catalyst that prompted the construction of the
10 federal levee system for the Mississippi River; and

11 WHEREAS, these continuous high water marks on the Mississippi River have forced
12 the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and area levee districts into a
13 continuous flood-fight mode since late October; and

14 WHEREAS, the Bonnet Carré Spillway has been opened twice this year for a total
15 of fifty-nine days as of May 28, 2019, and three times in the last four years, to relieve
16 pressure on the New Orleans area levees; and

17 WHEREAS, these frequent extended openings of the Bonnet Carré Spillway have
18 diverted as much as two hundred thousand cubic feet per second of freshwater into Lake

1 Ponchartrain, negatively impacting saltwater fisheries, crab population, and oyster beds; and

2 WHEREAS, the planned opening of the Morganza Spillway could have a devastating
3 impact on people, property, and wildlife in the Atchafalaya Basin; and

4 WHEREAS, the National Weather Service's Lower Mississippi River Forecast
5 Center indicates that the current record-setting flood stage duration could last well into late
6 June, possibly even into July; and

7 WHEREAS, the continuous high water on the Mississippi River have increased river
8 currents, negatively affecting navigation and making marine commerce more dangerous; and

9 WHEREAS, the continuous high water on the Mississippi is causing stress to the
10 levee system protecting millions of Louisianians; and

11 WHEREAS, the hypoxia, or bottom area of low oxygen, in Louisiana coastal waters
12 west of the Mississippi River known as the "Dead Zone" is approximately the size of
13 Delaware, measuring two thousand seven hundred twenty square miles; and

14 WHEREAS, additional, smaller, more consistent, controlled, and predictable
15 diversion would reduce the need of resorting to such drastic measures as opening the Bonnet
16 Carré and Morganza spillways; and

17 WHEREAS, implementing multiple mid-range diversion from the Mississippi River
18 between Baton Rouge and New Orleans could alleviate the stress on Louisiana's levee
19 system, assist marine navigation by decreasing river currents during high water events, and
20 restore wetlands with sediment currently carried off the Continental Shelf.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
22 request the United States Army Corps of Engineers to consider additional water diversion
23 projects to help manage high water issues on the Mississippi River in addition to the large
24 scale water diversion projects such as the Bonnet Carré and Morganza spillways.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
26 Colonel Michael Clancy, New Orleans District Commander, United States Army Corps of
27 Engineers.

