

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

BY REPRESENTATIVES COUSSAN, BOURRIAQUE, BUTLER, CARRIER, CORMIER,
LYONS, AND MINCEY AND SENATOR HENSGENS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress and the Louisiana Congressional delegation to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to more efficiently coordinate the removal of dislocated oilfield equipment after natural disasters in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, hurricanes that blow through coastal Louisiana, particularly those that come ashore as a Category 3 or higher, such as Hurricane Rita in 2005 and particularly Hurricane Laura in 2020, leave behind destruction and dislocation of people, homes, and equipment; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Laura is estimated to have caused between \$4 billion and \$12 billion in damages mostly to Louisiana and mostly in the coastal areas of Southwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, a component of that damage involves the dislocation of equipment from the oil and gas industry located in coastal Louisiana, including storage tanks, drums, pipe segments, and other equipment used in the oil patch, equipment that is picked up by the wind and water of the hurricane and dropped elsewhere in the coast; and

WHEREAS, nearly eighty percent of the land in coastal Louisiana is privately-owned land, so much of the dislocated oil and gas equipment lands on privately-held property; and

WHEREAS, some of the dislocated oilfield equipment contains materials that can cause pollution if the tanks and drums are damaged through the dislocation and could also be the cause of marine accidents when they are located in waterways where boat captains do not expect to find such hazards; and

WHEREAS, initial efforts to locate and identify equipment displaced by a hurricane include an attempt to identify the owner of the equipment, notify the owner that their equipment has been found, and request that the owner remove their equipment from another person's property; and

WHEREAS, the second step in attempting to address the dislocated equipment is the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LaDEQ), the Louisiana State Police, and the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office (LOSCO) working in cooperation with the United States Coast Guard and, under the auspices of FEMA, working to remove any tank or drum that could be the source of pollution in the marsh or could be the cause of marine accidents involving boats and displaced tanks or drums; and

WHEREAS, after sources of pollution and immediate hazards are removed by LaDEQ, State Police, and LOSCO, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development and the Louisiana National Guard, again under the auspices of the FEMA, identify the location and nature of additional tanks, drums, and other oilfield equipment dislodged by the hurricane so removal plans can be developed; and

WHEREAS, plans for removal of dislodged equipment that is neither hazardous nor polluting include a development of a timeline and an assessment of the potential damage to the marsh that could occur as a result of removal efforts versus the damage that the item may cause by its relocation to the spot; and

WHEREAS, because the process is a bifurcated process, requiring removal of hazardous or polluting items first and then removal of the remainder of the equipment, many times a situation arises that results in a displaced tank being bypassed on the way to remove a hazardous or polluting tank when removing all the equipment at the same time would be more efficient, more cost-effective, and require less overall time to remove all the dislodged equipment; and

WHEREAS, the FEMA practices and procedures do not allow the removal of nonhazardous, non-polluting items prior to or at the same time as removal of other displaced oilfield tanks, drums, and other equipment, thereby elongating the process and increasing the damage to the private property located in the marshes of coastal Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency to more efficiently coordinate the removal of dislocated oilfield equipment after natural disasters in Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE