

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 148

BY SENATOR HARRIS

LOCAL OFFICIALS. Requests the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to establish new billing policies and procedures.

1 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 have continued to escalate, the
18 Sewerage and Water Board has continued to increase user fees; and

1 WHEREAS, although the city's residents understand the need to increase user fees
2 to generate sufficient revenue for necessary infrastructure improvements, many recently
3 began to question the billing policies and procedures of the Sewerage and Water Board as
4 they were repeatedly receiving erroneous water bills; and

5 WHEREAS, on May 8, 2018, the Sewerage and Water Board announced its plan to
6 implement a new billing system to address customer complaints about high water bills; and

7 WHEREAS, after the implementation of the new billing system the city's residents
8 have found more errors in their water bills, and the staff of the Sewerage and Water Board
9 has been slow to respond to their complaints; and

10 WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Sewerage and Water Board establish new billing
11 policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage services to provide for a more
12 efficient and accurate billing system, and such policies and procedures should include rules
13 authorizing the adjusting, releasing, or extinguishing of any indebtedness from a customer's
14 sewerage and water bill as provided in R.S. 33:4071(F); and

15 WHEREAS, the new billing policies and procedures should also address the
16 following: discounts for elderly, disabled, and low-income customers; eliminate arbitrary
17 estimate billing; improving customer service, public outreach, and overall communication,
18 including holding community meetings and written notification of rate increases at least
19 ninety days prior to an increase; and

20 WHEREAS, the Sewerage and Water Board should provide a written report on the
21 status of billing policies and procedures to the Senate Committee on Local and Municipal
22 Affairs on a quarterly basis.

23 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
24 does hereby urge and request the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to review its
25 current billing policies and procedures for sewerage, water, and drainage services and to take
26 all necessary steps to establish new policies and procedures that provide for a more efficient
27 and accurate billing system.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
29 executive director of the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Lebra R. Bias.

SR 148 Original	DIGEST 2023 Regular Session	Harris
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Requests the New Orleans Sewerage and Water Bd. to review its billing policies and procedures and to take all necessary steps to establish new policies and procedures that provide for a more efficient and accurate billing system.