

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 140

BY REPRESENTATIVES LAMBERT AND ST. GERMAIN AND SENATOR WARD

FISHING/CRAWFISH: Urges the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to examine the issue of a wild-caught crawfish fishing season

1   A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2       To urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to examine the issues involved  
3               with establishment of a wild-caught crawfish fishing season.

4               WHEREAS, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission is constitutionally  
5       charged with the responsibility of protecting the natural resources of the state including the  
6       fish and wildlife that live in the state; and

7               WHEREAS, part of the responsibility of the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission is  
8       to protect and manage the fish and wildlife populations of the state while also providing an  
9       opportunity for the citizens of the state to engage in the hunting and fishing activities that  
10       are so elemental to the culture of Louisiana; and

11               WHEREAS, the Atchafalaya Basin has long been recognized for its commercial  
12       crawfish production that has provided thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to the state  
13       of Louisiana and the Atchafalaya Basin crawfish production has varied widely through the  
14       years; and

15               WHEREAS, wild-caught Atchafalaya Basin crawfish is a much desired product and  
16       a multimillion dollar industry in the state but there are few if any regulations concerning  
17       harvest seasons and the size of catch; and

18               WHEREAS, there have been no scientific studies conducted to determine the size  
19       and health of the breeding stock of crawfish in the Atchafalaya Basin and at the present time  
20       there is no specific fishing season set for the taking of wild-caught crawfish in the state of  
21       Louisiana; and

1           WHEREAS, setting a harvest season could be used to help manage the crawfish  
2 stock in a sustainable way taking into account the advent of modern technology and  
3 equipment; and

4           WHEREAS, in recent years the demand for crawfish has increased multifold and has  
5 created a situation where there are more fishermen resulting in more crawfish being  
6 harvested earlier each year and also later each year leading to an elongated season that could  
7 eventually harm the overall health and sustainability of the crawfish crop in Louisiana; and

8           WHEREAS, the elongated season could possibly lead to reduced breeding stock in  
9 future years and the lack of a scientifically based harvest season may have led to very small,  
10 immature crawfish finding their way into the marketplace which could also harm the overall  
11 market for crawfish throughout the state and country by diminishing the quality of the  
12 product; and

13           WHEREAS, many factors may be involved in the variation of the size of market  
14 crawfish including the mesh size used in crawfish traps that could result in harvesting  
15 smaller sized crawfish, the lack of a defined harvest season that could affect the size and  
16 sustainability of the wild-caught population, and water quality issues that could stunt growth.

17           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
18 urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to examine all of the issues  
19 involved in the sustainability and harvest of wild-caught crawfish and the possibility of a  
20 wild-caught crawfish fishing season and to report findings of the examination, including any  
21 proposed legislation, to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment and  
22 the Senate Committee on Natural Resources no later than February 15, 2016.

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, as a  
24 part of their study, examine the trip tickets associated with crawfish to discover trends or  
25 data that could illuminate issues and could lead to management methods that would result  
26 in the increase of production of crawfish harvest throughout the crawfish season.

27           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the  
28 secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

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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HCR 140 Original

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Lambert

Requests the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries to examine the issue of a wild-caught crawfish fishing season and report findings by February 15, 2016.