

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 102

BY REPRESENTATIVES DOVE, BILLIOT, GISCLAIR, HARRISON, HENDERSON,
AND ST. GERMAIN AND SENATORS AMEDEE AND CHABERT

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the support of the Louisiana Legislature for the request by the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the United States Secretary of Commerce and the administrator of the Small Business Administration to declare a fisheries disaster in the state of Louisiana as a result of the Mississippi River flooding and the opening of the Morganza and Bonnet Carre spillways.

WHEREAS, since 2005, South Louisiana, its residents, and its businesses have been devastated by a succession of natural and man-made disasters including Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 followed by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008 and then the area was confronted with hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil and gas released into the Gulf of Mexico after the explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon rig; and

WHEREAS, hurt more than most businesses along the coast, the fishing industry is still on its knees after the series of disasters which resulted in numerous fisheries closures, particularly over the past fourteen months as a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, closures that have impacted the industry further because of a continuing lack of confidence by the fisheries markets and customers who fear that the seafood from the Gulf of Mexico is tainted and dangerous to consumers; and

WHEREAS, now South Louisiana and the fishing industry is faced with record-setting rising waters in the Mississippi River and its tributaries and distributaries, with water levels such that both the Bonnet Carre and the Morganza spillways have been opened, Morganza for the first time in thirty-eight years; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of the impacts of the water levels and increased fresh water on oyster beds and marine nurseries in addition to the inability of fishermen to fish for the period of time that the water levels are at record-high levels, the secretary of the

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has requested that the secretary of the United States Department of Commerce declare a commercial fisheries failure and requested support from the United States Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration for commercial and recreational fishing and associated businesses; and

WHEREAS, the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has also requested of the administrator of the Small Business Administration that she ". . . begin the necessary step of activating all relevant federal disaster declaration clauses that would allow . . . assistance to our residents, our businesses, and our coastal communities" including temporary suspensions of loan repayments for those businesses which currently have SBA disaster and economic injury loans as a result of the previous disasters experienced by the residents of the state of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its support for the request by the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the United States Secretary of Commerce and the administrator of the Small Business Administration to declare a fisheries disaster in the state of Louisiana as a result of the Mississippi River flooding and the opening of the Morganza and Bonnet Carre spillways.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the United States Secretary of Commerce, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, and the members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE