

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY REPRESENTATIVES BROADWATER AND STUART BISHOP

WATERWAYS/LAKES: Urges and requests the Department of Environmental Quality to report to the legislature what would be required to clean up Capitol Lake

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Department of Environmental Quality to report to the legislature  
3 what would be required to clean up Capitol Lake.

4 WHEREAS, Capitol Lake, including its smaller component located to the south and  
5 east, has a long and storied history including having once been known as Bayou Garrison  
6 named for the garrisons that quartered along its banks and was a strategic element of the  
7 Battle of Baton Rouge in August of 1862; and

8 WHEREAS, as the city of Baton Rouge grew, the original development of the city  
9 was along the Mississippi River in what is now the downtown area and most of the  
10 population was located close to the bayou and later the lake, including the original location  
11 of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge; and

12 WHEREAS, the bayou was eventually closed off from the Mississippi River which  
13 created the lake that we all know now as Capitol Lake, named for the fact that it is located  
14 directly north of the Louisiana State Capitol; and

15 WHEREAS, Capitol Lake has been a significant part of the environs about the  
16 Louisiana State Capitol and contributes to the beauty of those environs, particularly where  
17 tourism is concerned; and

18 WHEREAS, the Louisiana State Capitol is one of the most visited sites in the state  
19 by visitors to the state, partially because it is the state capitol but also because it is one of  
20 only two skyscraper-style capitols in the country and because of the beauty of its Art Deco  
21 styling; and

1           WHEREAS, through the years, unfortunately, the esthetic value of the lake has not  
2 been appreciated, and it was used as a wastewater receiving body and as a drainage basin for  
3 facilities and roads located nearby the lake resulting in a loss of water quality and a reduction  
4 in the attractiveness of the lake; and

5           WHEREAS, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the concentration of polychlorinated  
6 biphenyls (PCBs) was so high that signs were posted along the banks of the lake warning  
7 people not to consume fish taken from the lake; and

8           WHEREAS, the Louisiana State Capitol is considered by many to be the welcoming  
9 point for visitors to the state and, as a person would want his front yard and front door to be  
10 kept attractive to welcome visitors to his home, so Louisianians want the area around the  
11 state capitol to be kept in an appropriate manner to welcome the world to the state of  
12 Louisiana; and

13           WHEREAS, with continued siltation from the Northdale Canal to the east of the  
14 south lake portion of Capitol Lake and evaporation of the water during drought conditions  
15 that have been experienced recently in Louisiana, the lakes are beginning to silt in and  
16 degrade, leading to the lakes being a significantly less attractive element of the state capitol  
17 area; and

18           WHEREAS, such degradation, essentially on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol,  
19 is unfortunate and speaks badly of Louisiana's desire to put our best foot forward and our  
20 state agencies should take the lead in rectifying the situation; and

21           WHEREAS, improving the situation for Capitol Lake will require an assessment of  
22 the lake and the steps needed to rectify years of neglect and will involve multiple state  
23 agencies.

24           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
25 urge and request the Department of Environmental Quality to report to the legislature what  
26 would be required to clean up the appearance of Capitol Lake and to make the water quality  
27 appropriate for a fish habitat.

28           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Environmental Quality make  
29 use of the expertise of other state agencies, particularly the Department of Wildlife and  
30 Fisheries, the Department of Natural Resources, and the State Land Office, and that the other

1 state agencies lend their expertise to the Department of Environmental Quality for this study  
2 and report.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a report be presented to the House Committee  
4 on Natural Resources and Environment, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate  
5 Committee on Natural Resources, and the Senate Committee on Finance no later than March  
6 1, 2015.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the  
8 secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality.

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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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Broadwater

HCR No. 47

Urges and requests the Dept. of Environmental Quality to report to the legislature what would be required to clean up the appearance of Capitol Lake and to make the water quality appropriate for a fish habitat.

Requires that a report be presented to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, the House Committee on Appropriations, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, and the Senate Committee on Finance no later than March 1, 2015.