

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25

BY SENATOR HODGES

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Comite River Diversion Canal/Amite River Basin Task Force and to authorize the task force to study and make recommendations on actions necessary to complete construction of the Comite River Diversion Project and mitigate flooding caused by the Comite and Amite rivers.

WHEREAS, the Amite River and its tributary, the Comite River, are major causes of catastrophic flooding in the Greater Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area and all impacted downstream communities of East Baton Rouge Parish, Livingston Parish, and Ascension Parish; and

WHEREAS, during the floods of 1983 and 2016, substantial portions of the parishes of East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and Ascension were inundated with flood waters; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project is to divert flood waters from the upper Comite River to the Mississippi River; at its maximum capacity, the project will divert twenty thousand cubic feet per second by gravity flow; and

WHEREAS, once completed, the Comite River Diversion Canal could divert fifty percent of the flood waters from the upper Comite River, which would substantially reduce flood stages along the lower Comite and Amite rivers; and

WHEREAS, following the displacement of thousands of residents from the New Orleans area after Hurricane Katrina, East Baton Rouge Parish experienced an explosive population growth and is now the most populous parish in the state, making the Comite River Diversion Canal Project all the more important and urgently significant; and

WHEREAS, the work of the task force originally began pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 of the 2014 Regular Session and continued pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 66 of the 2015 Regular Session, House Concurrent Resolution No. 39 of the 2016 Regular Session, House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 of the 2019 Regular Session, House Concurrent Resolution No. 62 of the 2020 Regular Session, and House Concurrent Resolution No. 17 of the 2022 Regular Session.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Comite River Diversion Canal/Amite River Basin Task Force and authorizes the task force to meet and make recommendations to the legislature and the appropriate state and federal agencies on actions necessary to complete the construction and maintenance of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project, including strategies to comply with mitigation requirements and right-of-way acquisitions, mitigation of flooding caused by the Comite River, other required mitigation projects and flood plain planning throughout the Amite River Basin, and the actions of the watershed initiative pertaining to the Amite River Basin to maintain transparency to the citizens of the Amite River Basin.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be comprised of the following members:

(1) The state senator for Senate District 13, who shall serve as the chairman of the task force.

(2) Two members of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate whose districts are directly impacted by the Amite River Basin.

(3) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives whose district corresponds with Senate District 13, who shall serve as the vice chairman of the task force.

(4) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, whose districts are directly impacted by the Amite River Basin.

(5) One member appointed by the members of the Louisiana congressional delegation representing the district in which the Amite River Basin is located.

(6) The secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, or his designee.

(7) The executive director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, or his designee.

(8) One member appointed by the chairman of the task force who is a former member of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District board of commissioners.

(9) One member appointed by the director of the Louisiana Geological Survey.

(10) The director of the Department of Public Works of East Baton Rouge Parish, or his designee.

(11) One member appointed by the president of the Louisiana Home Builders Association, who is a home builder within the area impacted by the Amite River Basin District.

(12) One member appointed by Louisiana REALTORS who is a realtor in the area impacted by the Amite River Basin District.

(13) One member appointed by the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Louisiana Recovery Office.

(14) One member appointed by the Louisiana Landowners Association, Incorporated, who is a landowner in the area impacted by the Amite River Basin District.

(15) One member appointed by the president of the board of commissioners for the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District.

(16) The executive director of the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors, or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the names of designees appointed to the task force to the chairperson no later than June 30, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the task force shall convene its first meeting no later than July 31, 2024, at the call of chairperson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the task force shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All official actions of the task force shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall receive staff support from the Senate and may receive additional assistance from one or more of the entities from which the task force membership is designated or appointed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit recommendations to the Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works, and the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works no later than February 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate on the date of the submission of its report or April 13, 2025, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Louisiana congressional delegation representing the district in which the Amite River Basin is located, the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, the executive director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, the president of the Amite River Basin Drainage and Water Conservation District, the director of the Louisiana Geological Survey, the director of the Department of Public Works of East Baton Rouge Parish, the president of the Louisiana Home Builders Association, the president of Louisiana REALTORS, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Louisiana Recovery Office, the president of the Louisiana Landowners Association, Inc., and the executive director of the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES