

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 189

BY SENATOR HEWITT

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to consider all available data and alternatives to make a determination of the One Lake project's technical feasibility, economic justification, environmental acceptability, and potential downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin.

WHEREAS, the Pearl River Flood Risk Management Project, known as the "One Lake" project, is the nonfederal sponsor's Locally Preferred Plan (LPP) that includes a proposal to dredge and dam the Pearl River to create a one thousand five hundred acre lake near Jackson, Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, the construction of One Lake is likely to alter the seasonal flow and temperature of the Pearl River waters; and

WHEREAS, fundamental changes to water flows and temperatures could precipitate severe downstream environmental and economic impacts, including saltwater intrusion, destruction of plant and animal life and habitat, loss of sensitive cultural sites and artifacts, increased pollution, sedimentation, river flooding, storm surge, and adverse effects to navigation, land values, and recreation; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the St. Tammany Parish Department of Engineering examined evaporation predictions for the proposed One Lake project and found that evaporative losses subtracted from either the minimum daily mean discharges by month or the tenth percentile of mean daily discharges, indicate the flow of the already impacted Pearl River will be further compromised; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Oyster Task Force and the Mississippi Governor's Oyster Council have identified insufficient freshwater quantity flowing down the Pearl River to coastal waters as a threat to oyster production in both states; and

WHEREAS, stable water flows on the Pearl River and its tributaries are necessary for adequate dilution of effluents discharged from dozens of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit holders in the counties and parishes south of the proposed project site; and

WHEREAS, the Pearl River is on the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's Impaired Waters List due to wastewater runoff originating from parking lots, farms, and septic tanks, which results in unacceptable levels of nitrogen and phosphorus reaching the river, increasing health hazards to humans and the ecosystem, and necessitating limitation of these pollutants in existing permits held by business, industry, and municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the proposed One Lake project requires close scrutiny from all interests that rely on the Pearl River to safely and legally discharge regulated wastewater; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 15 CFR 930.33, federal agencies shall submit consistency determinations to relevant state agencies for activities having coastal effects, regardless of location; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 1176 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018, the secretary of the Army shall review and determine whether the project is technically feasible, economically justified, environmentally acceptable, and will be consistent with applicable policies, regulations, and federal laws, and such determination shall assess potential downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin resulting from the project; and

WHEREAS, the project shall be designed in a manner that addresses any potential adverse impacts or that provides mitigation in accordance with Section 906 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to provide a consistency determination to all relevant state agencies, including the Department of Natural Resources, office of coastal management, which will evaluate the foreseeable direct and indirect effects of the One Lake project on Louisiana coastal resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to review all available data, assess all potential downstream impacts to the Pearl River Basin that could result from the project, and consider all available alternatives, A, A1, C, and a combination of these, as well as new alternatives as described in the Notice of Intent to Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Pearl River Federal Flood Risk Management Project, Pearl River

Watershed, published May 18, 2023, in the Federal Register; to further demonstrate that it has conducted economic and environmental impact analyses that include every river-dependent industry and municipality on the Pearl River and every Clean Water Act NPDES permit holder and water withdrawal permit holder in the Pearl River Basin, in all counties and parishes on the Pearl River downstream of Rankin and Hinds Counties; and to provide a mass-balance water budget for all uses on the Pearl River in determining whether the One Lake project is technically feasible, economically justified, and environmentally acceptable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE