

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 861

By Dickerson

A RESOLUTION in support of a clean Harpeth River.

WHEREAS, for centuries, Tennesseans have depended on rivers as an integral part of their local culture and way of life; and

WHEREAS, a healthy environment is known to improve quality of life, providing physical and mental well-being, recreation, aesthetics, education, cultural connections, and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Harpeth River, originating in Eagleville, Rutherford County, flows through the heart of downtown Franklin, the 14th fastest growing city in the United States, traverses Williamson County, one of the fastest growing counties in Tennessee, into high-growth Davidson County-Nashville, and then flows through Harpeth River State Park and Cheatham and Dickson counties into the Cumberland River; and

WHEREAS, the entire reach of the Harpeth River was originally designated a State Scenic River, and that segment of the river in Davidson County remains a State Scenic River; and

WHEREAS, since the State of Tennessee first issued its list of impaired waters, or "303(d) list," pursuant to the federal Water Pollution Control Act, or the "Clean Water Act," in 1999, the Harpeth River has been included on such list because the river frequently fails to meet water quality standards for fish and aquatic life and recreational use during periods of low summer flow; and

WHEREAS, the Harpeth River is included on the 303(d) list on account of, among other things, low dissolved oxygen and elevated phosphorus levels; nearly sixty percent of the entire

length of the main river is impaired, in addition to thirty-seven percent of its more than 1,000 miles of tributary streams; and

WHEREAS, the Harpeth River is one of the most heavily recreated in the State of Tennessee and is used for recreational purposes by more than 500,000 Tennesseans annually; and

WHEREAS, excessive pollution can imperil public health and downstream economic growth by consuming available assimilative capacity; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's leaders support the prompt restoration of the Harpeth River, so that it can be removed as soon as possible from the State's list of impaired waters and be an even greater contributor to tourism and other economic growth in the region; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee encourages initiatives to protect and improve rivers and other water resources, to accelerate restoration of impaired streams, to encourage the exchange of information, coordination, and planning among agencies, citizens, and communities through the application of good science for monitoring, planning, and policy, and to focus stakeholder programs and resources on collaboration, thus promoting better decisions on spending available resources; and

WHEREAS, by closely cooperating with local citizen groups, local governments, and State and federal agencies, regulators are better able to focus on those controls necessary to produce measurable improvements in water quality, resulting in more uniform public policies and enforcement for all stakeholders with an interest in solving water quality problems involving permitting, planning, and monitoring; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's leaders support amicable, consensual solutions to these problems, so that all stakeholders can avoid costly litigation and devote their efforts to improving the Harpeth River's quality; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that in the interest of restoring the impaired waters of the Harpeth River and its tributaries, this General Assembly urges and encourages all stakeholders to work

collaboratively, share information and resources, and keep lines of communication and conversation open to achieve their shared goal of improved water quality on the river.