

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 66

BY REPRESENTATIVE HODGES AND SENATOR WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To continue the Comite River Diversion Canal Project Task Force that was created pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 51 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Legislature to study and make recommendations on actions necessary to complete the construction of the Comite River Diversion Canal Project.

WHEREAS, the Amite River and its tributary, the Comite River, are major causes of catastrophic flooding in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area, particularly in the northeastern part of East Baton Rouge Parish; and

WHEREAS, during the flood of 1983, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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, as a result, flood insurance premiums would be dramatically reduced in the area, which would boost home ownership and the overall economy of the region; and

WHEREAS, this is a major reason why the task force should continue its work; and

WHEREAS, following the displacement of thousands of residents from the New Orleans area after Hurricane Katrina, East Baton Rouge Parish has 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.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend the Comite River Diversion Canal Project 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.

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

(1) One member shall be the member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives whose district is directly impacted by the Comite River Diversion Canal Project and who shall be the chairman of the task force.

(2) One member shall be the member of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate whose district is directly impacted by the Comite River Diversion Canal Project and who shall be the vice chairman of the task force.

(3) One member shall be appointed by the members of the Louisiana congressional delegation representing the district in which the Comite River Diversion Canal Project is located.

(4) One member shall be the district engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, or his designee.

(5) One member shall be the secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development, or his designee.

(6) One member shall be the executive director of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, or his designee.

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

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

(9) One member shall be the director of the Department of Public Works of East Baton Rouge Parish, or his designee.

(10) One member shall be a home builder within the area impacted by the Comite River Diversion Canal Project appointed by the president of the Louisiana Home Builders Association.

(11) One member shall be a realtor in the area impacted by the Comite River Diversion Canal Project appointed by the Louisiana Realtors Association.

(12) One member shall be a representative of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) appointed by the director of FEMA's Louisiana Recovery Office.

(13) One member shall be a landowner in the area impacted by the Comite River Diversion Canal Project appointed by the Louisiana Landowners Association.

(14) One member shall be the state representative representing House District 63.

(15) One member shall be the state senator representing District 15.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall meet at least on a biannual basis and shall submit recommendations to the appropriate legislative committees, as necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force will continue to be staffed by the staff of the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works for all meetings of the task force.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE