

Louisiana Water Resources Commission
October 1, 2015

On motion of Mark Davis and second by Jerry Graves, with unanimous approval,

A RESOLUTION

of the Louisiana Water Resources Commission

WHEREAS, Louisiana’s ground and surface water resources are a public benefit of incalculable value for the people, environment, and economy of the State; and

WHEREAS, the proper management of these resources is a critical responsibility of the State and its departments under the Constitution, which explicitly requires that, “The natural resources of the state, including air and water, and the healthful, scenic, historic, and esthetic quality of the environment shall be protected, conserved, and replenished insofar as possible and consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the people”; and

WHEREAS, such proper management of Louisiana’s water resources requires scientific data acquired through the monitoring of water levels, flows, use, quality, and quantity; and

WHEREAS, the State’s monitoring program for water resources deteriorated from a peak of 739 groundwater monitor wells and 184 surface water gaging stations in the early 1980s to a low of 164 wells and 59 gaging stations in 2012, a 78 percent and 68 percent reduction respectively; and

WHEREAS, in its March 2012 report to the Legislature entitled *Managing Louisiana’s Groundwater Resources*, this Commission identified the State’s “single most significant and fundamental groundwater resource management issue” as the “timely and periodic acquisition and dissemination of comprehensive aquifer-wide groundwater level measurements, water well production and groundwater quality data”; and

WHEREAS, in the same report, the Commission firmly articulated its finding that improvements to this monitoring program “must be adequately addressed in order for the state to develop and implement any successful groundwater management strategy”; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources, in response to the urgings of the Commission, secured in 2012 \$2.7 million in Federal funds for the development of an expanded monitoring network program for three years that included the addition of approximately 200 water level observation wells, 100 water quality observation wells, and 50 chloride monitor wells to the existing network, along with expanded water use reporting on an annual basis and new and updated surface water monitoring; and

WHEREAS, the monitoring network program’s funding expired at the end of June 2015 but the Department of Natural Resources successfully secured an extension of Federal dollars through June 2016 as a temporary measure to maintain

continuity in the most fundamental aspects of the monitoring network improvements implemented over the past three years; and

WHEREAS, the Federal agency has communicated to the Department of Natural Resources that these funds will not be available for use by the State to maintain the monitoring program after June 2016; and

WHEREAS, because of the data gathered to date by the monitoring network program, and following the Commission's finding in its March 2012 report to the Legislature regarding the "need for the state's current water management efforts to evolve into a more robust, comprehensive plan," the Department of Natural Resources has been able to proceed with a prototype water use sustainability assessment and planning framework through the Water Institute of the Gulf that will provide additional insight into, and a strategy to address, Louisiana's current and future water resource management issues; and

WHEREAS, the final Water Institute report is scheduled to be available in spring 2016, and will provide a blueprint for future planning to manage the state's water resources for long-term sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the continued and successful future use of the Water Institute planning framework, as well as other water resource planning and management tools, is dependent upon a continuous, adequately maintained water resource monitoring program; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Water Resources Commission is authorized by La. R.S. 38:3097.4.D.(3) and (4), in pertinent part, to "Continue the development, in cooperation with the commissioner [of Conservation], of a statewide ground water resource management program that shall include but not be limited to evaluation of the state's ground water resources including current and projected demands..." and to "Evaluate the state's surface water resources including current and projected demands"

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Water Resources Commission does hereby urge and request the Governor and Legislature of the State of Louisiana to develop or appropriate dedicated, recurring funds from whatever sources available for the long-term maintenance of a robust water resource monitoring network and associated planning that will provide the firm scientific basis necessary for the successful management of Louisiana's water resources into the future.

On behalf of the Members of the Louisiana Water Resources Commission,



Bradley Spicer,
Vice-Chairman