

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 22

BY SENATORS MURRAY, HEITMEIER, SHEPHERD, DUPLESSIS, BAJOIE AND
DUPRE

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the levee boards of the East Jefferson Levee District, Lake Borgne Levee District, and Orleans Levee District, and the parish governing authorities of Plaquemines and St. Tammany parishes to designate a representative of such entity to meet and participate in a coordinated effort to devise a plan to achieve a long-term solution for hurricane or storm protection, flood control, and coastal protection for the citizens of southeast Louisiana.

WHEREAS, on August 29, 2005, and once again on September 24, 2005, hurricanes Katrina and Rita, respectively, swept across southeastern Louisiana, demolishing homes, schools, and businesses, obliterating entire communities, and earning their place in history as the most destructive natural disasters ever measured in the United States; and

WHEREAS, those charged with the mind-boggling task of rebuilding this storm-ravaged region must essentially begin from scratch, including reworking and improving the complex levee system that will protect the region and its inhabitants from future storms such as hurricanes Katrina and Rita; and

WHEREAS, the catastrophic flooding of the city of New Orleans and the parishes of Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany has had a staggering human and economic impact on not only southeast Louisiana, but also the entire state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Katrina, which measured as a Category 4 storm upon landfall, made painfully clear that it is not enough to rebuild and restore the battered levees to their pre-storm Category 3 level of hurricane protection, and that the economic recovery of this state depends upon the construction of improved levees at a Category 5 level of protection to withstand stronger storms; and

WHEREAS, while the United States Army Corps of Engineers, pursuant to federal law, is responsible for overseeing the design, construction, repair, and inspection of levees, the maintenance is handled by the local levee boards; and

WHEREAS, the United States Corps of Engineers proceeded with emergency repairs to the levee breaches in New Orleans in the immediate aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and has begun making longer-term repairs to the levee system; and

WHEREAS, given the statutory authority of the levee boards to establish for the levee districts under its authority adequate drainage, flood control, and water resources development, including but not limited to the planning, maintenance, operation, and construction of reservoirs, diversion canals, gravity and pump drainage systems, erosion control measures, marsh management, coastal flooding, and other flood control works as they relate to tidewater flooding, hurricane protection, and saltwater intrusion, it is in the best interest of the southeastern portion of the state and of the state as a whole to request that these levee boards and surrounding parishes work in a coordinated effort to devise a plan to protect southeast Louisiana from further devastation of storms and surges that may ravage these areas once again, with the understanding that "hurricanes and flood waters know no parish boundaries."

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the levee boards of the East Jefferson Levee District, Lake Borgne Levee District, and Orleans Levee District, and the parish governing authorities of Plaquemines and St. Tammany parishes to designate a representative of such entity to meet and participate in a coordinated effort to devise a plan to achieve a long-term solution for hurricane or storm protection, flood control, and coastal protection for the citizens of southeast Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each levee board, through its designated representative, shall work in a coordinated effort to develop a plan which addresses and integrates functions relative to the protection, conservation, and restoration of the coastal area in southeast Louisiana to achieve long-term flood, hurricane, and coastal protection.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the group established herein shall consult with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and any state or local agency as may be necessary in developing such coordinated plan for southeast Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any such plan shall be consistent with the goals set forth in the state's comprehensive master coastal protection plan developed pursuant to the authority of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such group shall meet once a month, at a minimum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution shall be forwarded to the president of each levee board of commissioners of the East Jefferson Levee District, Lake Borgne Levee District, and Orleans Levee District, and to the parish presidents of Plaquemines Parish and St. Tammany Parish.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE