

Senate Resolution 142

By: Senators Thompson of the 33rd, Stokes of the 43rd, Tanksley of the 32nd, Walker of the 22nd and Johnson of the 1st

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Creating the Joint Comprehensive Water Plan Study Committee; to create the Water Plan
- 2 Advisory Committee; and for other purposes.
- 3 WHEREAS, the task of securing sustainable water sources for Georgia while improving and
4 preserving the quality of rivers, lakes, and ground water is very important; and
- 5 WHEREAS, since 1964, the General Assembly has passed laws relating to water quality
6 protection and water quantity allocation; and
- 7 WHEREAS, these laws and subsequent programs form a strong foundation for water policy
8 in Georgia; and
- 9 WHEREAS, recent stresses to Georgia's water resources mandate a re-examination of
10 Georgia's water policy in Georgia; and
- 11 WHEREAS, the potential for salt-water intrusion into the Floridian Aquifer in coastal
12 Georgia is a major concern and is the subject of the interim strategy of the Environmental
13 Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources for groundwater withdrawal
14 reduction and is the subject of ongoing scientific studies funded jointly by the State of
15 Georgia and the private sector; and
- 16 WHEREAS, agricultural water use in the Flint River in southwest Georgia has the potential
17 to harmfully deplete the flow of the Flint River in drought years and the Environmental
18 Protection Division is preparing a water development and conservation plan for this area;
19 and
- 20 WHEREAS, Georgia has been negotiating water allocation formulas with the States of
21 Alabama and Florida under interstate water compacts for the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Flint, and

- 1 Chattahoochee River Basins, and the results of these negotiations will most likely establish
- 2 the basis of future water management in these basins; and
- 3 WHEREAS, the droughts of 1998, 1999, and 2000 had profound negative impacts on
- 4 agriculture and on drinking water systems in Georgia; and
- 5 WHEREAS, there are many potential methods to augment water supply sources to reduce
- 6 water shortages in future droughts; and
- 7 WHEREAS, there are many potential methods to reduce water demands in Georgia during
- 8 drought and nondrought periods; and
- 9 WHEREAS, the Georgia Municipal Association and the Association of County
- 10 Commissioners of Georgia have developed recommendations for improvements in water
- 11 resource management; and
- 12 WHEREAS, the quality of Georgia's rivers and streams is diminished by pollution from
- 13 stormwater runoff; and
- 14 WHEREAS, this pollution, called "nonpoint source" pollution, cannot be corrected only by
- 15 the treating of stormwater runoff but will involve new approaches to stormwater management
- 16 and new approaches in land development; and
- 17 WHEREAS, many local governments are performing watershed assessments to identify and
- 18 correct water pollution problems coming from stormwater runoff; and
- 19 WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Division is preparing total maximum daily loads
- 20 which allocate pollution loads in river basins; and
- 21 WHEREAS, implementation of total maximum daily load solutions will require close
- 22 coordination and cooperation between state government, local government, agriculture, and
- 23 business; and
- 24 WHEREAS, the metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Business
- 25 Coalition convened a task force and made suggestions for a regional approach to water
- 26 quality issues in metropolitan Atlanta; and

1 WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Division prepared a Water Resources Summary
2 Document in 1986 which included plans to meet Georgia's water needs until the year 2000;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, many local governments have implemented water source enhancement -
5 reservoirs and wells - and water conservation as outlined in the 1986 document; and

6 WHEREAS, additional actions are necessary to provide safe and secure water supply for
7 predicated population growth at least 20 years into the future; and

8 WHEREAS, in light of the above issues it is now time to prepare a new comprehensive water
9 plan for Georgia.

10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
11 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Comprehensive Water Plan Study Committee to be
12 composed of 23 members consisting of four members of the Senate to be appointed by the
13 President of the Senate, four members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by
14 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and, as ex officio members, the chairperson of
15 the Senate Natural Resources Committee and the chairperson of the House Committee on
16 Natural Resources and the Environment who shall be cochairpersons of the study committee.

17 The President of the Senate shall appoint two additional members, one each from the
18 following: county government, and agricultural interest groups. The Speaker of the House
19 of Representatives shall appoint two additional members, one each from the following: city
20 government, and wildlife conservation groups. The Governor shall appoint five additional
21 members. The director of the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of
22 Natural Resources, the Commissioner of Natural Resources, the Commissioner of
23 Agriculture, and the executive director of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation
24 Commission shall all serve in ex officio capacities as members of the committee. Either
25 chairperson may call meetings of the committee. Such appointments shall be made by May
26 15, 2001, with the first meeting of the study committee to occur by June 15, 2001.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the water
28 resource issues, including water quality and quantity, facing Georgia. The committee shall
29 consider the existing policy, laws, rules, and programs to manage water resources. The
30 committee shall recommend a process and schedule to prepare the details of a comprehensive

1 water plan, develop the principle for a comprehensive water plan, and recommend any other
2 action or legislation the study committee deems appropriate.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there is created a Water Plan Advisory Committee,
4 consisting of members of the scientific community, business community, agricultural
5 community, environmental advocacy groups, professions with expertise in water quality and
6 management, and the academic community to be selected by the cochairpersons of the Joint
7 Comprehensive Water Plan Study Committee. The study committee cochairpersons shall
8 appoint an advisory committee chairperson who shall be a faculty member of the University
9 System of Georgia. The Water Plan Advisory Committee shall assist the study committee,
10 as requested, in gathering information, preparing briefing documents, preparing
11 recommendations, and evaluating proposed recommendations. The Water Plan Advisory
12 Committee may be divided into subcommittees at the discretion of the advisory committee
13 chairperson.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study committee may conduct such meetings at such
15 times and places as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and
16 effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes for this
17 resolution. The legislative members of the study committee shall receive the allowances
18 authorized for legislative members of interim committees but shall receive the same for not
19 more than ten days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out
20 the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds appropriated to the Senate and House
21 of Representatives. No allowance shall be paid for other members of the committee. The
22 study committee shall make a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions
23 for proposed legislation, if any, prior to December 1, 2001. The study committee shall make
24 a final report of its findings and recommendations with suggestions for proposed legislation,
25 if any, prior to September 1, 2002. The study committee shall stand abolished on September
26 1, 2002.