

House Resolution 271

By: Representatives Barnard of the 121st, Post 1, DeLoach of the 127th, Williams of the 128th, Keen of the 146th, Hill of the 147th, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Study Committee on Coastal Marshlands Protection; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Georgia's coastal marshlands have long been recognized by the General
4 Assembly as vital areas of the state; and

5 WHEREAS, tidal marshlands are recognized as waters of the state; and

6 WHEREAS, nonpoint source pollution such as storm water runoff is widely recognized as
7 one of the greatest pollution threats to coastal estuaries and nonpoint source pollution is
8 increasing with coastal population growth; and

9 WHEREAS, sedimentation in coastal marshlands can contribute to nonpoint source pollution
10 that adversely impacts fish, shrimp, crabs, and marine life supporting multimillion dollar
11 commercial and sport fisheries and associated coastal economies; and

12 WHEREAS, the Georgia coast is experiencing a severe saltmarsh die-off, the causes of
13 which are undetermined; and

14 WHEREAS, the marsh die-off is currently affecting hundreds of acres such that some areas
15 of marsh are reduced to bare mud and are beginning to slough into the water causing
16 problems for navigation and flood control and compromising seafood nursery functions; and

17 WHEREAS, there is an increasing need to examine scientific information on estuarine health
18 and on the potential causes and findings regarding the marsh die-off; and

19 WHEREAS, there is a need for examination of marsh buffers and other appropriate measures
20 for protection of the state's tidal wetlands, estuarine water quality, and sensitive coastal

1 habitats, including the findings and recommendations of the Department of Natural
2 Resources's marsh hammocks stakeholders group.

3 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
4 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Study Committee on Coastal Marshlands Protection
5 to be composed of ten members. Five members of the Senate shall be appointed by the
6 Senate Committee on Assignments and five members of House of Representatives shall be
7 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Senate Committee on
8 Assignments shall designate a member of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
9 Representatives shall designate a member of the House who shall serve as cochairpersons
10 of the committee. The committee shall meet at the call of the cochairpersons.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the above
12 issues and recommend any actions or legislation which the committee deems necessary or
13 appropriate. The committee may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as
14 it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers,
15 perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The
16 members of the committee shall receive the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8
17 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions
18 of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the Senate and the House of
19 Representatives. The expenses and allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be
20 received by any member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are
21 authorized. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and recommendations,
22 with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before
23 December 31, 2003. The committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2003.