

Senate Resolution 579

By: Senators Kemp of the 46th, Gillis of the 20th, Johnson of the 1st and Kemp of the 3rd

ADOPTED SENATE

A RESOLUTION

- 1 Creating the Joint Water Conservation Study Committee; and for other purposes.
- 2 WHEREAS, the drought that lasted from 1998 to 2002 had profound negative impacts on
3 public drinking water systems, industry, agriculture, commercial fisheries, recreation, and
4 other water users in Georgia; and
- 5 WHEREAS, the growth in population and economic activity in Georgia has placed added
6 demands on the surface and ground water resources of the state; and
- 7 WHEREAS, the potential for salt water intrusion into the Floridian Aquifer in coastal
8 Georgia is a major concern and is the subject of the interim strategy of the Environmental
9 Protection Division of the Department of Natural Resources for ground water withdrawal
10 reduction and is the subject of ongoing scientific studies funded jointly by the State of
11 Georgia and the private sector; and
- 12 WHEREAS, the future health of the agricultural economy and the environment of the Flint
13 River Basin in southwest Georgia are dependent upon the adoption of development and
14 conservation plans that are based on sound science; and
- 15 WHEREAS, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has examined
16 measures to meet water demands in the Atlanta metropolitan area through reallocation of
17 water from existing sources, increased efficiency, and water conservation; and
- 18 WHEREAS, the unresolved water issues between Georgia and its neighboring states of
19 Alabama and Florida will have uncertain impacts on the amount of water Georgia can
20 withdraw from the Flint and Chattahoochee River Basins; and

1 WHEREAS, water issues exist between Georgia and South Carolina regarding the use of
2 surface and ground water shared by the two states, the resolution of which could limit future
3 water withdrawals within the state; and

4 WHEREAS, there are limited new sources of water to meet increasing demands for water;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, it costs less to be more efficient with the water resources that we already have;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, increasing demands for water withdrawals can have significant adverse effects
9 on downstream water users, water quality, and aquatic habitat; and

10 WHEREAS, there are many potential methods to reduce water demands in Georgia during
11 drought and nondrought periods; and

12 WHEREAS, the Department of Natural Resources employs water conservation staff to
13 develop a water conservation plan which will require legislative support to implement; and

14 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia is expected to undertake development of a Comprehensive
15 State Water Management Plan that may require increased emphasis on water conservation
16 measures; and

17 WHEREAS, many local governments are examining options and have implemented water
18 resource enhancements, such as reservoirs and wells, and water conservation measures; and

19 WHEREAS, implementing water conservation measures can help delay or avoid expensive
20 capital projects; and

21 WHEREAS, additional actions are necessary to provide safe and secure water supplies for
22 predicted population growth; and

23 WHEREAS, conserving water means having more water available for future growth,
24 ecosystem protection, current quality of life, and future generations; and

25 WHEREAS, in light of the above issues, it is now time to examine state options for
26 encouraging water conservation and improved efficiency in water use.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
2 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Water Conservation Study Committee to be
3 composed of eleven members consisting of three members of the Senate to be appointed by
4 the Senate Committee on Assignments, three members of the House of Representatives to
5 be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and five members to be
6 appointed by the Governor representing the following interests: county government, city
7 government, the environmental community, the business community, and the agricultural
8 community. A cochairperson from the Senate shall be selected by the Senate Committee on
9 Assignments from those Senate members appointed to the committee and a cochairperson
10 from the House of Representatives shall be selected by the Speaker of the House of
11 Representatives from those House members appointed to the committee.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of water
13 conservation options for Georgia. The committee shall consider existing policy, laws, rules,
14 and programs to encourage or require water conservation measures by each water-using
15 sector. The committee shall recommend legislative, financing, and other policy changes
16 necessary for Georgia to increase water conservation, to assist city and county governments
17 and other permitted water users to increase water conservation and to improve water use
18 efficiency, and recommend any other action or legislation the committee deems appropriate.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee may conduct such meetings at such
20 places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully
21 and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes
22 of this resolution. The legislative members of the committee shall receive the allowances
23 authorized for legislative members of interim committees but shall receive the same for not
24 more than three days unless additional days are authorized. Members of the committee who
25 are state officials, other than legislative members, and state employees shall receive no
26 compensation for their services on the committee, but they shall be reimbursed for expenses
27 incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the committee in the same
28 manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials or employees.
29 Citizen members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services on the
30 committee. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come
31 from the funds appropriated to the Senate and the House of Representatives. The committee
32 shall make a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed
33 legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 1, 2004. The committee
34 shall stand abolished on December 1, 2004.