

Senate Resolution 989

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Harrell of the 40th, Anderson of the 43rd, Davenport of the 17th, Mangham of the 55th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the United States Department of Energy (DOE) to reinstate and fully fund
2 radiological and water quality protections for the Savannah River and surrounding
3 communities; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, the Savannah River is an essential source of drinking water, economic activity,
5 recreation, and natural habitat for the people of the State of Georgia; and

6 WHEREAS, the Savannah River Site (SRS), owned by the United States Department of
7 Energy (DOE), lies adjacent to the Savannah River and has historically been used for
8 production, processing, and cleanup of nuclear materials; and

9 WHEREAS, concerns about potential environmental and radiological impacts along the
10 Savannah River, including downstream Georgia communities such as Burke County and
11 Richmond County, have led to calls for independent monitoring and public engagement; and

12 WHEREAS, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division previously conducted a
13 state-supported environmental monitoring program in Georgia until 2004; and

14 WHEREAS, the radiological and water quality monitoring work previously supported by
15 DOE and undertaken by the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL) at the University
16 of Georgia provided critical data, science-based context, and educational outreach to
17 residents of Burke County, including water, soil, wildlife, and food sampling, under the
18 Radiological Education, Monitoring, and Outreach Project (REMOP); and

19 WHEREAS, REMOP was designed as a community-centered project to collect
20 environmental data, educate local residents about radionuclides and heavy metals, and
21 synthesize existing monitoring information from multiple sources for public understanding;
22 and

23 WHEREAS, REMOP activities between 2017 and 2019 included the creation of outreach
24 materials; community talks; sampling of air, surface water, groundwater, soil, fruits,
25 vegetables, meat, and milk; and compilation of current and historic data from DOE-SRS,
26 Georgia EPD, South Carolina DHEC, and Plant Vogtle environmental reports; and

27 WHEREAS, REMOP represented an important model of partnership between an academic
28 research institution, a community-based nonprofit, and federal agencies to increase
29 transparency and community access to environmental data; and

30 WHEREAS, earlier resolutions urging for the restoration of independent monitoring in
31 Georgia successfully advanced community monitoring activities and strengthened
32 engagement with affected citizens; and

33 WHEREAS, renewed federal activities at the SRS, including proposed plutonium pit
34 production along with ongoing water quality concerns in Burke and Richmond counties,

35 underscore the need for robust, independent environmental protections and consistent
36 monitoring of radioactive and chemical constituents in the Savannah River watershed.

37 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
38 urge the United States Department of Energy to reinstate, fully fund, and expand
39 comprehensive radiological and water quality protections, monitoring, and reporting along
40 the Savannah River corridor between the Savannah River Site and Plant Vogtle, all of which
41 should include transparent public reporting of results, coordination with state agencies and
42 academic institutions, and meaningful engagement with affected Georgia communities.

43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
44 to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the public and the
45 press.