

By: Hewes

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 651

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE ASSISTANCE OF THE
2 MISSISSIPPI CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IN OBTAINING FUNDS FOR THE
3 U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF
4 WATER SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE COASTAL AREA OF MISSISSIPPI.

5 WHEREAS, water is a basic and vital resource. To enhance the
6 quality of life and general welfare for ourselves and our
7 posterity, water resource planning is necessary to provide for the
8 development and use of water resources in a manner that will best
9 serve the physical, environmental and social needs of the people
10 of Mississippi; and

11 WHEREAS, Section 51-3-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, states "It
12 is the policy of the Legislature that conjunctive use of
13 groundwater and surface water shall be encouraged for the
14 reasonable and beneficial use of all water resources of the
15 state." The law further states that the policies, regulations and
16 laws of the state shall be interpreted and administered so that
17 groundwater and surface water resources "shall be integrated in
18 their use, storage, allocation and management"; and

19 WHEREAS, the coastal area consists of Pearl River, Stone,
20 George, Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties; and

21 WHEREAS, groundwater problems have been found in areas of the
22 Mississippi Delta and the metropolitan centers around Memphis,
23 Tupelo, Hattiesburg, Jackson and the Gulf Coast. Data provided by
24 the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality show a trend
25 of lowered static water levels in some aquifers over the past 35
26 years. These declines are often localized and may not be
27 superimposed upon some regional trend; and

28 WHEREAS, in recent years the coastal area has experienced
29 tremendous growth. Most of this growth has occurred in the three
30 southern counties. This growth, resulting from increased
31 industrial development, expansion of federal government facilities
32 and the establishment of the casino gaming industry, has increased
33 the population and demand for services substantially. In addition
34 to the population increase, a substantial increase has also been
35 seen in tourism; and

36 WHEREAS, the estimated population of the coastal area was
37 428,891 in 1998. This represents an increase of 13% over the 1990
38 census figure of 378,363. In fact, coastal area counties have
39 shown significant growth since the 1950 census. Between 1950 and
40 1990, Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties had population growth
41 of 168%, 96% and 267%, respectively. George, Stone and Pearl
42 River Counties each grew between 65% to 90%. During the same
43 period, the population of the entire state grew only 18%. During
44 the 1990s, the coastal area has continued significant growth of
45 13% as compared to a 7% growth rate statewide; and

46 WHEREAS, in the coastal area, the total average daily
47 withdrawal is estimated to exceed 350 million gallons. Fresh
48 surface water withdrawals occur primarily in Harrison and Jackson
49 Counties and are utilized for industrial uses. Fresh groundwater
50 withdrawals average about 70 million gallons per day. Two-thirds
51 of that water is withdrawn for public supply purposes; and

52 WHEREAS, 1990 census information shows Hancock, Harrison and
53 Jackson Counties rank among the highest in the state in households
54 not served by public or privately-operated water supply systems;
55 and

56 WHEREAS, estimated fresh groundwater withdrawals increased by
57 25% from 1975 to 1990. Estimated fresh surface water withdrawals
58 increased from 1975 to 1995 by more than 250% from 44 million
59 gallons per day to 168 million gallons per day. During the period
60 1975 to 1995, estimated saline surface water withdrawals in the

61 coastal area decreased by 85%; and

62 WHEREAS, significant population growth potential is projected
63 for all counties in the coastal area. County population growth
64 estimates range between 22% and 59%; and

65 WHEREAS, calculated estimates for water demand in 2005 show
66 an increased demand of 20% over 1995 in public supply for the
67 coastal area. The estimated demand increase for 2015 is 36% over
68 the 1995 levels; and

69 WHEREAS, in the three southern counties, manufacturing
70 employment is projected to increase above the 1995 estimated
71 employment. The fastest growing sectors of the southern coastal
72 counties' employment are projected to be in retail trade (12% by
73 2005 and 20% by 2015) and services (30% by 2005 and 52% by 2015);
74 and

75 WHEREAS, concerns have been raised about the coastal area's
76 ability to provide a predictable and reliable long-term source of
77 water supply to meet its increasing needs; and

78 WHEREAS, there is no water crisis presently facing the
79 coastal area. Continued population and industrial growth will
80 place greater demands on coastal area water supplies. Future
81 growth will result in the need to access water of sufficient
82 quantity and adequate quality in a certain location; and

83 WHEREAS, proper investigation, analysis and planning for
84 water resource development is a lengthy process. Counties and
85 communities in the coastal area need to unite their efforts in
86 water resource planning and development, as well as the
87 consideration of alternatives for meeting future water resource
88 needs. Any water resource plan for the coastal area should be
89 comprehensive in area and content and should address the costs and
90 benefits of various alternatives:

91 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
92 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
93 we do hereby request the assistance of the Mississippi

94 congressional delegation in obtaining funds for the U.S. Army
95 Corps of Engineers to conduct a comprehensive study of water
96 supply and demand in the coastal area of Mississippi. The study
97 should assess the need for the construction of a multi-use
98 reservoir in the coastal area, including total cost estimates for
99 design and construction of that reservoir.

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be
101 provided to each member of the Mississippi congressional
102 delegation.