

Senate Bill 119

By: Senators Jeffares of the 17th, Jones of the 25th, Tolleson of the 20th, Gooch of the 51st and Ginn of the 47th

**AS PASSED SENATE**

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT**

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 holidays and observances, so as to designate the first Monday in May of each year as "Water  
3 Professionals Appreciation Day" in Georgia; to provide for legislative findings; to provide  
4 for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds that:

8 (1) The Georgia Water Quality Control Act was passed by the Georgia General Assembly  
9 and signed into law in 1964 by Governor Carl Sanders;

10 (2) At that time, there were 25 communities in Georgia which had no public sewer  
11 systems, 40 communities with a sewer system but no treatment facilities, 60 communities  
12 with a sewer system but only primary treatment facilities, 50 communities with a sewer  
13 system and secondary treatment facilities which were in need of improvement, and 395  
14 industries which had documented untreated or inadequately treated discharges to Georgia's  
15 surface waters;

16 (3) At the time of passage of the Act, many of Georgia's surface waters were extremely  
17 polluted, and serious water quality problems existed all over the State of Georgia;

18 (4) The state established the Georgia Water Quality Control Board (later reconstituted as  
19 the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as a result of the 1972 Reorganization of  
20 State Government under Governor Jimmy Carter), and Governor Sanders appointed R.S.  
21 "Rock" Howard to be the board's executive secretary;

22 (5) By the time the Federal Water Quality Control Act was passed in 1972, most of  
23 Georgia's industries had been brought into compliance with the initial requirements of the  
24 federal Act;

- 25 (6) Over the ensuing four decades, billions of federal, state, and local dollars have been  
26 invested in planning, designing, and constructing modern publicly owned wastewater  
27 treatment facilities throughout this state;
- 28 (7) Georgia's water professionals are committed to operating these facilities to maintain  
29 consistent compliance with extremely stringent standards;
- 30 (8) Both publicly and privately owned facilities have performed so well that they are no  
31 longer the most significant threat to Georgia's waters;
- 32 (9) The quality of Georgia's waters has improved dramatically throughout this great state  
33 over the years since the passage of the original Act;
- 34 (10) It is imperative that these improvements be sustained while continuing our efforts to  
35 educate Georgians of their growing responsibility in the reduction of non-point sources of  
36 pollution to Georgia's waters;
- 37 (11) The success that we have experienced thus far and the success that we will have is  
38 due to the tremendous dedication and efforts of Georgia's water professionals; and
- 39 (12) It is fitting and proper that these individuals and their efforts be appropriately  
40 recognized.

41 **SECTION 2.**

42 Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to holidays and  
43 observances, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

44 "1-4-22.

45 The first Monday in May of each year is designated as 'Water Professionals Appreciation  
46 Day' in Georgia."

47 **SECTION 3.**

48 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.