

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 91

BY REPRESENTATIVE HODGES

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the division of administration, office of community development to consider funding the Darlington Reservoir.

WHEREAS, during the historic flooding of 2016, particularly in the Baton Rouge region, eighty percent of the land that flooded was in high-risk zones; and

WHEREAS, of that eighty percent, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), only about a third of the flooded structures were located in those areas; and

WHEREAS, FEMA viewed this lower percentage as a positive and evidence that efforts to reduce flooding in high risk-areas, such as elevating buildings and property buy-backs, are working; and

WHEREAS, the recent increase and approval of funding for the Amite River Diversion Canal has increased the interest in complimentary projects to help prevent future massive flooding events such as the one that was experienced in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Darlington Reservoir, a dry reservoir that would only hold water when homes are threatened by floodwater, which was once at the forefront of flood control efforts, is one such project; and

WHEREAS, the Darlington Reservoir would dam the Amite River on the St. Helena -East Feliciana Parish line, thereby protecting communities situated further downstream from increased flooding; and

WHEREAS, projects such as the Darlington Reservoir would have protected downstream communities like Watson, Central, and Denham Springs from the massive amounts of floodwater that they received during the 2016 flood of the region; and

WHEREAS, a recent report from the director of Dams, Levees, and Reservoir Development for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development shows that the Darlington Reservoir could have saved thousand of homes from flooding in 2016; and

WHEREAS, certain members of management with the United States Army Corps of Engineers are investigating the Darlington Reservoir as a possible flood prevention option; and

WHEREAS, a model run by Dewberry and Associates, using data from the newly completed Amite Watershed Numerical Model and applying 2016 storm data, revealed that the Darlington Reservoir project could have saved 20,500 homes and resulted in \$2.2 billion saved from flood damage; and

WHEREAS, the study found that water levels as a result of the August 2016 flood would have been seven feet lower in the Watson area, six feet lower in the Denham Springs area, and between one and a half and seven feet lower in the Central area; and

WHEREAS, a project such as the Darlington Reservoir could have saved an untold number of lives and property from the vicious floodwaters that ravaged the Baton Rouge region and surrounding areas during the August flood of 2016.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the division of administration, office of community development to consider funding the Darlington Reservoir to assist with the flood prevention efforts in the Baton Rouge region.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the executive director of the division of administration, office of community development.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE