

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 50

BY REPRESENTATIVE HARRISON

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Board of Regents to study the role, mission, and structure of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and report its findings to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2012 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) was formed to coordinate and stimulate Louisiana's public postsecondary education activities in marine research and education through an executive board that reports to the Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, LUMCON's research portfolio expands our knowledge of estuaries, coastal waters, and open ocean ecosystems and supports issues of importance to both Louisiana's needs in marine science and coastal resources and those of the global ocean; and

WHEREAS, LUMCON provides marine education programs to educators and students from early childhood to the universities, as well as adult education courses to the general public; and

WHEREAS, LUMCON has vessels, facilities, and researchers that enable quick responses in cases of coastal and gulf emergencies and provide scientific expertise in both short-term and long-term response to such events; and

WHEREAS, LUMCON oversees the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, one of twenty-eight national estuary programs in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Coastal Restoration and Enhancement through Science and Technology program is an alliance of eleven academic institutions within southern Louisiana and Mississippi, and LUMCON serves as the administrative and financial agent for the program; and

WHEREAS, the Gulf Sustainability Consortium and the Gulf Research Initiative for Resilient Louisiana Consortia have been created to consider the broader issue of coastal needs; and

WHEREAS, a strong unified consortium is needed at this time, and LUMCON has great potential as a leader in this field; and

WHEREAS, the role, mission, and structure of LUMCON in relation to these and other entities should be evaluated with an eye toward creating a strong, collaborative relationship with all existing consortia working in the coastal, wetlands, and marine education areas; and

WHEREAS, state budget reductions have put the sustainability and faculty productivity of LUMCON at risk; and

WHEREAS, a specific plan to maximize research coordination, faculty, and facilities is needed to expand the successful reach of this institution; and

WHEREAS, the legislature recognizes the value of LUMCON as well as the need to assess the current fiscal strength and long-term support needed for the facility; and

WHEREAS, currently, the executive board is working diligently to develop a comprehensive plan to address and support the future of LUMCON with the support of the Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, coastal and marine research and education are paramount not only to Louisiana's economic viability but to its very existence.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Board of Regents to study the role, mission, and structure of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium and report its findings to the House Committee on Education not later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2012 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study also shall include an examination of the relation of LUMCON to other consortia to determine the appropriate authority and funding levels needed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Board of Regents and the executive director of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.