

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Expressing the Legislature's support for citizens and communities in eastern South Dakota impacted by severe high water conditions over the last two decades.

WHEREAS, during the 1990s, the Waubay Lakes area in northeastern South Dakota experienced unprecedented high water levels, an event that continues to the present day and has caused serious disruption for the people and the economy of the affected area; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared the Waubay Lakes region a disaster area; and

WHEREAS, the Waubay Lakes area includes Pickerel Lake, Enemy Swim Lake, Hildebrands Lake, Spring Lake, Waubay Lake, Minnewasta Lake, Rush Lake, Blue Dog Lake, and Bitter Lake, near the town of Waubay; and

WHEREAS, during the extreme high water conditions of the 1990s, which have continued to the present, several of the lakes in the Waubay area coalesced into single, larger bodies of water, with Bitter Lake, the terminal lake in the Waubay lake system, receiving water from the lakes upstream; and

WHEREAS, studies at South Dakota State University and related institutions have shown high water periods in the Waubay Lakes area that resemble the current situation on only three other occasions in the last one thousand years. Studies indicate that the Bitter Lake outlet has not been overtopped since the end of the glacial period; and

WHEREAS, water levels in this area have fluctuated drastically, with Bitter Lake being dry in 1934 at the height of the Dust Bowl. At this point it is impossible to predict the duration of the high water conditions in the Waubay Lakes area; and

WHEREAS, the high water conditions have presented immense difficulties for landowners and agricultural producers, who have had crop and pasture land inundated and out of production for years, while still being on the tax rolls; and

WHEREAS, the high water conditions have presented challenges to local governments, affecting county and township roads and local water and sewer systems, as well as other infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, finding acceptable solutions to the problems created by high water conditions without adversely impacting people and property in other drainage systems is a difficult challenge; and

WHEREAS, several other areas in eastern South Dakota have also been affected by high water conditions during this period and face issues as severe as those in the Waubay Lakes area:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the South Dakota Legislature recognizes the extreme hardship facing the people in the Bitter Lake and Waubay Lakes areas, as well as other parts of the state that are experiencing extended high water conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature supports South Dakota's citizens and communities that have been impacted by extended high water conditions in all efforts to deal with this crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislature recognizes and supports the opportunity for all those affected to come together to resolve these issues for the betterment of their communities and South Dakota.

Adopted by the Senate,
Concurred in by the House of Representatives,

March 10, 2014
March 11, 2014

Matt Michels
President of the Senate

Jeannette Schipper
Secretary of the Senate

Brian Gosch
Speaker of the House

Arlene Kvislen
Chief Clerk of the House