

# State of South Dakota

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2014

525V0507

## SENATE STATE AFFAIRS ENGROSSED NO. **SCR 6** - 03/05/2014

Introduced by: Senators Frerichs, Begalka, Bradford, Buhl O'Donnell, Ewing, Jones (Tom), Krebs, Lucas, Maher, Omdahl, Otten (Ernie), Rhoden, Sutton, and Welke and Representatives Gosch, Bartling, Bolin, Craig, Feickert, Feinstein, Gibson, Greenfield, Haggar (Jenna), Heinert, Hoffman, Hunhoff (Bernie), Kirschman, Novstrup (David), Parsley, Peterson, Rounds, Schaefer, Schoenfish, Sly, Soli, Tulson, Tyler, Werner, and Wismer

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

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

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

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

12 WHEREAS, during the extreme high water conditions of the 1990s, which have continued



1 to the present, several of the lakes in the Waubay area coalesced into single, larger bodies of  
2 water, with Bitter Lake, the terminal lake in the Waubay lake system, receiving water from the  
3 lakes upstream; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Eighty-Ninth Legislature  
23 of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the South  
24 Dakota Legislature recognizes the extreme hardship facing the people in the Bitter Lake and

1 Waubay Lakes areas, as well as other parts of the state that are experiencing extended high water  
2 conditions; and

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

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