

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 120

Expressing the sense of the Congress with regard to the world's freshwater resources.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2005

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY (for herself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Ms. WOOLSEY, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. WATERS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BAIRD, Ms. CARSON, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. EMANUEL, Mr. OWENS, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Ms. SOLIS, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress with regard to the world's freshwater resources.

Whereas the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development established March 22 as World Water Day to promote the international observance of water as a human right;

Whereas freshwater is fundamental for life, a finite natural resource, and belongs to the earth and all species for all time;

Whereas available freshwater represents less than one-half of one percent of the world's total water stock;

Whereas global consumption of water is doubling every 20 years, more than twice the rate of human population growth;

Whereas 31 countries currently face water shortages with another 17 likely to be added to this list by 2025;

Whereas more than one billion people already lack adequate access to safe drinking water; 2.5 billion people have no access to proper sanitation and more than five million people, mostly children, die each year from water-related diseases;

Whereas unsustainable practices lead to depletion of aquifers, falling water tables, and ground and surface water pollution;

Whereas indigenous peoples have had the waters on which they depend dangerously polluted and exploited;

Whereas current United Nations Millennium Development Goals now call for reducing by one-half the number of those without safe drinking water and sanitation by the year 2015;

Whereas the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has adopted the General Comment on the right to water, which states that the human right to drinking water is fundamental for life and health, and sufficient and safe drinking water is a precondition for the realization of all other human rights; and

Whereas the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 aggravated the already overwhelming water crisis and the World Health Organization projects that without mobilized and coordinated assistance, there could

be as many fatalities from diseases, many water borne, as were seen from the actual disaster itself: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That this resolution may be cited as the
3 “Water for the World Resolution”.

4 SEC. 2. The Congress—

5 (1) affirms water as a public trust and global
6 public good that should not be treated as a private
7 commodity where this would limit or deny public ac-
8 cess to freshwater resources;

9 (2) recognizes that government policies should
10 ensure that all individuals have equitable access to
11 water to meet basic human needs and that no one
12 is cut off from water for survival due to economic
13 constraints;

14 (3) upholds the principle that governments
15 should engage all members of society, including local
16 civil society organizations, citizens’ associations, en-
17 vironmental groups, indigenous peoples, farmers,
18 women, workers, and others, in direct and meaning-
19 ful participation in overseeing decisions about the
20 conservation, distribution, use, and management of
21 water in their communities, localities, and regions;

1 (4) asserts that water management priorities
2 should reflect the goals of safeguarding and sus-
3 taining water resources;

4 (5) recognizes that more sustainable agricul-
5 tural practices are necessary to protect water re-
6 sources;

7 (6) affirms that the United States Congress
8 firmly commits itself to meet the Millennium Devel-
9 opment Goals, especially as they pertain to universal
10 access to water and sanitation;

11 (7) recommends that international, regional,
12 and bilateral trade agreements should not include
13 conditions related to the provision of water for
14 human use that would result in reduced access to
15 water;

16 (8) affirms that access to international loans
17 and debt reduction programs should not be condi-
18 tioned on implementing increased cost recovery poli-
19 cies when those policies would result in significantly
20 increased water rates that reduce access to safe
21 drinking water and sanitation;

22 (9) asserts that the United States Executive
23 Directors of international financial institutions
24 should not approve loans that require increased cost
25 recovery, or water privatization or public/private

1 partnerships that would result in significant in-
2 creases in consumer water fees that would restrict
3 access to water;

4 (10) deems that Federal funding not be condi-
5 tioned on the consideration of public/private partner-
6 ships or other forms of privatization that would re-
7 strict access to water; and

8 (11) asserts that Federal policies should ensure
9 that in the United States direct and indirect sources
10 of water pollution, including factories, refineries,
11 commercial agriculture, and wastewater treatment
12 plants, are adequately regulated and those respon-
13 sible held accountable for the pollution they cause.

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