

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 266

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 6, 2007

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means and Financial Services, 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 22nd as World Water Day to promote the international observance of water as a human right;

Whereas available freshwater represents less than one-half of 1 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 1,000,000,000 people already lack adequate access to safe drinking water; 2,500,000,000 people have no access to proper sanitation and more than 5,000,000 people, mostly children, die each year from water-related diseases;

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

Whereas international trade agreements threaten sustainable and local management of water;

Whereas the poorest pay the highest price to access water;

Whereas civil society often have little say in water policy priorities;

Whereas the people of the United States have often expressed their compassionate desire to assist those in most need;

Whereas international financial institutions, institutions that receive significant U.S. funds, focus on private sector management of water that has been deemed a failure in providing access to the poor;

Whereas the Water for the Poor Act of 2005 calls on the United States Congress to significantly increase and prioritize water provision in United States international programs;

Whereas countries around the world have ratified international human rights agreements and enacted national constitutional provisions and laws enshrining the human right to water;

Whereas member States acting in human rights institutions of the United Nations have affirmed the human right to water calling upon all governments to take steps to ensure that a sufficient amount of good quality, affordable water be made available for all within a reasonable distance from a person's home;

Whereas the United Nations Human Development Report of 2007 calls on all governments to recognize the human right to water, prioritize and fund water and sanitation in national budgets, provide international assistance for water projects and develop a strong global plan of action; and

Whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change forecasts increased difficulty in improving access to safe drinking water and additional costs to the water services sector from changing water levels and contamination: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

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

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

10 (3) affirms that the United States Congress
11 firmly commits itself to meet the Millennium Devel-
12 opment Goals, especially as they pertain to uni-

1 versal, sustainable access to safe and affordable
2 water;

3 (4) affirms that access to international loans
4 and debt reduction programs should not be condi-
5 tioned on implementing increased cost recovery poli-
6 cies when those policies would result in significantly
7 increased water rates that reduce access to safe
8 drinking water and sanitation;

9 (5) asserts that the United States Executive
10 Directors of international financial institutions
11 should not approve loans that require increased cost
12 recovery, or water privatization or public-private
13 partnerships that would result in significant in-
14 creases in consumer water fees or in other ways re-
15 strict affordable access to water;

16 (6) asserts that Federal policies should ensure
17 that in the United States direct and indirect sources
18 of water pollution, including factories, refineries,
19 commercial agriculture, and wastewater treatment
20 plants, are adequately regulated and those respon-
21 sible held accountable for the pollution they cause;

22 (7) deems that Federal funding not be condi-
23 tioned on the consideration of public/private partner-
24 ships or other forms of privatization that would re-
25 strict affordable access to water;

1 (8) upholds the principle that governments
2 should engage all members of society, including local
3 civil society organizations, citizen associations, envi-
4 ronmental groups, indigenous peoples, farmers,
5 women, workers, and others, in direct and meaning-
6 ful participation in overseeing decisions about the
7 conservation, distribution, use, and management of
8 water in their communities, localities, and regions;

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

14 (10) recognizes the need to fully fund the
15 Water for the Poor Act of 2007 to ensure that all
16 individuals, especially those in most need, have equi-
17 table access to safe and affordable water; and

18 (11) recognizes the human right to water as
19 fundamental for life and health, and sufficient and
20 safe drinking water is a precondition for the realiza-
21 tion of all other human rights.

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