

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 15

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service should incorporate consideration of global warming and sea-level rise into the comprehensive conservation plans for coastal national wildlife refuges, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 9, 2011

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service should incorporate consideration of global warming and sea-level rise into the comprehensive conservation plans for coastal national wildlife refuges, and for other purposes.

Whereas global warming can generally be described as an increase in the average temperature of the earth's atmosphere, and sea-level rise can best be described as an overall increase in sea level;

Whereas global warming and related aspects of climate change are caused by the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases due to industrial processes and fossil fuel combustion associated with the process of eco-

conomic growth, and changes in land use such as deforestation;

Whereas studies show that the continuation of historical trends of greenhouse gas emissions will result in additional global warming, with current projections of global warming 2.5°F to 10.4°F by 2100;

Whereas global warming will induce sea-level rise that will steadily inundate coastal areas, change precipitation patterns, increase risk of droughts and floods, threaten biodiversity, and offer a host of potential challenges to public health;

Whereas the generally expected 50 to 200 cm sea-level rise from global warming would inundate 7,000 square miles of dry land in the United States and equal amounts of coastal wetlands;

Whereas such sea-level rise will effectively force recreational beaches inland, exacerbate coastal flooding, and increase the salinity of aquifers and estuaries in the next century;

Whereas it has been reported that the accumulation of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere now will persist for approximately 100 years;

Whereas if we are not proactive in our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and wait to see obvious effects of global warming and sea-level rise, it may be too late to avoid the harmful repercussions of such events;

Whereas the ongoing and projected estimates of sea-level rise as a result of global warming threaten the loss of 22 percent of the world's coastal wetlands by 2080;

Whereas the ongoing and projected increases in sea-level rise as a result of global warming have extremely strong implications for stewardship by the United States Fish and

Wildlife Service of nearly 1,100,000 acres of coastal wetlands located in 159 coastal national wildlife refuges in the United States and its Caribbean and Pacific territories;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System was created to conserve fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats;

Whereas the effects of global warming and sea-level rise may greatly impact the effectiveness of the National Wildlife Refuge System in the conservation of migratory birds, anadromous and interjurisdictional fish, marine mammals, endangered species and threatened species, and the habitats on which these species depend;

Whereas global warming and sea-level rise has already begun to affect some of the Nation's most valued natural resources such as the coral reefs near Buck Island National Park in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on the Chesapeake Bay, and other areas; and

Whereas amendments to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 that were made by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–57) require that the Secretary of the Interior shall prepare a comprehensive conservation plan for each national wildlife refuge within 15 years after the date of enactment of such Act: Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service
4 should incorporate consideration of the effects of
5 global warming and sea-level rise into the com-

1 prehensive conservation plan for each coastal na-
2 tional wildlife refuge;

3 (2) each such comprehensive conservation plan
4 should address, with respect to the refuge concerned,
5 how global warming and sea-level rise will affect—

6 (A) the ecological integrity of the refuge;

7 (B) the distribution, migration patterns,
8 and abundance of fish, wildlife, and plant popu-
9 lations and related habitats of the refuge;

10 (C) the archaeological and cultural values
11 of the refuge;

12 (D) such areas within the refuge that are
13 suitable for use as administrative sites or visitor
14 facilities; and

15 (E) opportunities for compatible wildlife-
16 dependent recreational uses of the refuge; and

17 (3) the Director of the United States Fish and
18 Wildlife Service, in consultation with the United
19 States Geological Survey, should conduct an assess-
20 ment of the potential impacts of global warming and
21 sea-level rise on coastal national wildlife refuges.

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