

108TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. CON. RES. _____

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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 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 call for reducing by one-half the number of those without safe drinking water and sanitation by the year 2015; and

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; Now, therefore, be it

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

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

7 (2) recognizes that government policies should
8 ensure that all individuals have equitable access to
9 water to meet basic human needs and that no one



1 is cut-off from water for survival due to economic
2 constraints;

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

11 (4) asserts that water management priorities
12 should reflect the goals of safeguarding and sus-
13 taining water resources; .

14 (5) recognizes that more sustainable agricul-
15 tural practices are necessary to protect water re-
16 sources;

17 (6) affirms that the United States Congress
18 firmly commits itself to meet the Millennium Devel-
19 opment Goals, especially as they pertain to universal
20 access to water and sanitation;

21 (7) recommends that international, regional,
22 and bilateral trade agreements, should not include
23 conditions related to the provision of water for
24 human use that would result in reduced access to
25 water;



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

7 (9) asserts that United States' Executive Direc-
8 tors of International Financial Institutions should
9 not approve loans that require increased cost recov-
10 ery, or water privatization or public/private partner-
11 ships that would result in significant increases in
12 consumer water fees that would restrict access to
13 water;

14 (10) deems that federal funding not be condi-
15 tioned on the consideration of public/private partner-
16 ships or other forms of privatization that would re-
17 strict access to water; and

18 (11) asserts that in the United States Federal
19 policies should ensure that direct and indirect
20 sources of water pollution, including factories, refin-
21 eries, commercial agriculture, and wastewater treat-
22 ment plants, are adequately regulated and those re-
23 sponsible held accountable for the pollution they
24 cause.

