COMMITTEE REPORT

February 25, 2016

**H. 4873**

Introduced by Reps. Ott and Hiott

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Read the first time February 11, 2016.

**THE COMMITTEE ON**

**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

To whom was referred a Concurrent Resolution (H. 4873) to recognize the importance of clean and abundant drinking water in South Carolina and to designate Tuesday, May 3, 2016, as “South Carolina Clean Drinking Water Day”, etc., respectfully

**REPORT:**

That they have duly and carefully considered the same and recommend that the same do pass:

DANIEL B. VERDIN III for Committee.

**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN AND ABUNDANT DRINKING WATER IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND TO DESIGNATE TUESDAY, MAY 3, 2016, AS “SOUTH CAROLINA CLEAN DRINKING WATER DAY” TO COINCIDE WITH NATIONAL DRINKING WATER WEEK.

Whereas, established in 1976, the South Carolina Rural Water Association, a non‑profit trade association, assists public and private water/wastewater systems statewide to ensure access to clean water for all South Carolinians; and

Whereas, simple measures taken to protect source water help ensure an ample supply of clean drinking water and reduce costs passed from water utilities to the customers by reducing the rate charged for water to customers; and

Whereas, the availability of clean drinking water promotes economic development, especially in rural parts of the State. The United States Department of Agriculture and South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (SCRIA) provide grant opportunities for eligible infrastructure projects designed to protect water quality resources which build economic development; and

Whereas, the Municipal Association of South Carolina reports that since 2013 SCRIA has awarded over $21 million in grants for seventy‑three projects, benefitting more than forty‑seven thousand customers statewide and leveraging $98 million in investment; and

Whereas, the Economic Infrastructure Program, one of SCRIA’s two grant programs, helps communities increase their capacity to meet new development opportunities and ensure publically owned industrial sites and parks can access necessary infrastructure; and

Whereas, actions compliant with both the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and federal Clean Water Act promote the availability of clean drinking water and effectively protect the propagation of safe fish, shellfish, and wildlife for fishermen and hunters throughout the State; and

Whereas, protecting water resources used to produce clean drinking water also creates a popular venue for recreation, attracting citizens and visitors to the estimated 24,436 miles of freshwater rivers and streams and 393,430 acres of lakes and reservoirs in the State. Protection of clean drinking water resources also promotes ecological health, aquatic‑life harvesting, and aesthetic value; and

Whereas, the State offers awards for participation in clean water initiatives, including the annual South Carolina Environmental Awareness Award from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources for outstanding contributions that protect, conserve, and improve South Carolina’s natural resources; and

Whereas, although clean drinking water is vitally important to human health, six percent of community water systems have reported health violations and ten percent of the state’s population is served by contaminated water systems according to the EPA; and

Whereas, the presence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products and endocrine disruptors in drinking water is causing emerging concerns and attracting the attention of states across the country, but currently no federal regulations exist to limit pharmaceuticals in drinking or natural water; and

Whereas, a recent study by the American Water Works Association revealed some one hundred pharmaceuticals in national surface waters of rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. The study also states that current scientific research indicates various synthetic chemicals could interfere with the normal functioning of endocrine systems in humans. With the increased use of pharmaceuticals and personal care products, concentrations of these chemicals may reach levels harmful to human health; and

Whereas, advocating for cleaner drinking water standards could introduce measures that would reduce the presence of these chemicals and prevent harm to the drinking water for the citizens of South Carolina. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize the importance of clean and abundant drinking water in South Carolina and designate Tuesday, May 3, 2016, as “South Carolina Clean Drinking Water Day” to coincide National Drinking Water Week.

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