

Mississippi Wildlife Federation

Adopted 2007

WE 18

RICHTON SALT DOME/PASCAGOULA RIVER

WHEREAS, the Pascagoula River is the last unimpeded major river system in the contiguous 48 states and is uniquely representative of the early southeastern landscape; and

WHEREAS, the River system's bottomland forests, marshes, savannas and aquatic habitats support rare and spectacular wildlife such as the Gulf sturgeon and 23 threatened or endangered species; and

WHEREAS, many species of birds use its extensive north-south forested corridor as a critical area for foraging and resting during intercontinental migrations; and

WHEREAS, the Pascagoula River is utilized extensively as a natural resource by citizens throughout the region and beyond for fishing, hunting, ecotourism, water sports, bird watching, and as an inspiration for other endeavors; and

WHEREAS, the Pascagoula River and its associated estuary serve as nurseries and habitats for commercial and recreational fin- and shellfisheries that provide jobs and have important economic impacts for Mississippi's coastal counties; and

WHEREAS, activities that alter the functional dynamics of this floodplain river ecosystem and associated flora and fauna also impact local citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Strategic Petroleum Site at Richton proposes to take 50 million gallons of water per day for a five-year period from the upper reaches of the Pascagoula River; and

WHEREAS, extractions of such large volumes of water from the Pascagoula River (up to 25% of seasonal flow) will have harmful effects on this pristine southern river ecosystem, its renewable living resources, and human interactions with these resources; and

WHEREAS, transport of nearly 80 billion gallons of hyper-saline water (brine) from the Strategic Petroleum Site at Richton for approximately 100 miles to the Gulf of Mexico off the State of Mississippi increases the risk of catastrophic pollution of the Pascagoula River ecosystem as well as harm to the state's coastal marshes, marine species and their essential habitats, and near shore marine environments, including a treasured National Seashore; and

WHEREAS, this discharge of brine has potential to negatively impact commercial and recreational fisheries that contribute significantly to the region's cultural and socio-economic well-being, particularly during the lengthy recovery from Hurricane Katrina;

RICHTON SALT DOME/PASCAGOULA RIVER (cont.)

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NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mississippi Wildlife Federation during its annual meeting in Jackson, Mississippi on this 7th day of December, 2007 requests that the U.S. Department of Energy address seasonal aspects of flow reduction resulting from its proposed water withdrawal from the Pascagoula River with a principal focus on determining impacts to floral, faunal, sociological, and economical dynamics of this incomparable river system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mississippi Wildlife Federation during its annual meeting in Jackson, Mississippi on this 7th day of December, 2007 requests that the U.S. Department of Energy evaluate project alternatives as per the guidelines of the National Environmental Policy Act that fully address potential impacts to the cultural, social, socio-economic, biological, and anthropologic values associated with the Pascagoula River ecosystem and associated estuary and marine environments. Results of this evaluation should be presented to the Governor of Mississippi, all state and federal natural resource agencies, and the general public.