

State of Vermont

House of Representatives



Montpelier, Vermont

Joint House Resolution

J.R.H. 8

Joint resolution supporting legal rights for the waters of the State

Offered by: Representatives Townsend of South Burlington, McCullough of Williston, and Sullivan of Burlington

Whereas, Vermont's surface waters are vital, public assets that provide the citizens of the State with clean water, recreation, and economic benefits, and

Whereas, improving and maintaining the quality of Vermont's waters are necessary to maintain the environmental and economic benefits that these waters provide, and

Whereas, despite State and federal law requiring Vermont to maintain and prevent degradation of State waters, Lake Champlain and multiple other lakes, rivers, and streams in all regions of the State are impaired, at risk of impairment, or subject to water quality stressors, and

Whereas, the State has committed to implement and fund a long-term Clean Water Initiative to improve, maintain, and protect the water quality of Vermont's waters, but funding water quality programs alone has, to date, been insufficient to protect the State's waters, and

Whereas, Vermont must acknowledge the fundamental need to protect the waters of the State by granting legal protectable rights to the State's waters that each citizen of the State can enforce to ensure the continued vitality of the State's waters, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly should enact legislation establishing a legal right for the waters of Vermont to exist, flourish, naturally evolve, and provide integral environmental and natural resource functions, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly should enact legislation establishing legal rights for waters of Vermont, including the legal right not to be degraded by pollution, and be it further

Resolved: That the General Assembly should enact legislation to grant to the people of Vermont, collectively and individually, the right to enforce the rights of State waters against any person that impairs those rights, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Vermont Congressional Delegation, and the Lake Champlain Committee.