

1 A RESOLUTION urging action to solve the Martin County water crisis.

2 WHEREAS, there are more than 400 small water systems in Kentucky, and those  
3 systems supply most of the drinking water to Kentucky residents; and

4 WHEREAS, like other drinking water systems in the nation, Martin County's water  
5 is severely degraded with exceedances of federal limits reported for chlorate, radium,  
6 trihalomethanes, as well as other contaminants including haloacetic acids; and

7 WHEREAS, frequently Martin County's water is discolored and malodorous, and  
8 the water district reports an unaccounted water loss of 64 percent, the source of which  
9 must be identified and resolved before making costly repairs; and

10 WHEREAS, Martin County Water District, like other small drinking water systems,  
11 is underfunded, requires infrastructure upgrades, and better management, but failure to  
12 improve the system in a timely manner has created a drinking water crisis in the  
13 community that is similar to the drinking water crisis in Flint, Michigan; and

14 WHEREAS, Martin County Water District is now teetering on insolvency and  
15 unable to repay over \$1 million in debt while repairing the drinking water system; and

16 WHEREAS, in November 2018, the Kentucky Public Service Commission  
17 approved a permanent rate increase and surcharges to shore up the failing water utility,  
18 but Martin County residents are poorer compared to the rest of the state and rate increases  
19 are a heavy burden on household budgets; and

20 WHEREAS, in February 2019 United States Representative Hal Rogers and  
21 Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin announced the receipt of \$3.4 million in federal grant-in-  
22 aid to be administered through the Kentucky Abandoned Mine Lands program, and the  
23 Kentucky Appalachian Regional Commission announced \$1.2 million in assistance for  
24 needed repairs which will be administered by the Department for Local Government;

25 NOW, THEREFORE,

26 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*  
27 *Kentucky:*

1           ➔Section 1.     The Kentucky Senate urges the Kentucky Public Service  
2 Commission and the Energy and Environment Cabinet to work cooperatively to  
3 determine the source of water loss and contamination in Martin County's water system so  
4 that funds can be appropriately directed to fix the water system's problems. Without  
5 addressing water loss and contamination, upgrades to the delivery of water and quality of  
6 service will be pointless, and financial losses will continue to accrue.

7           ➔Section 2.     The Kentucky Senate supports empowering the Kentucky Public  
8 Service Commission to undertake measures that are prudent and necessary to prevent  
9 Kentucky's small community public drinking water systems from insolvency and failure  
10 to serve the public. This power may include allowing the Kentucky Public Service  
11 Commission to assert greater control over the utility prior to petitioning for receivership.

12          ➔Section 3.     The Kentucky Senate expresses a need to review the progress made  
13 to implement the 20/20 Water Plan that was initiated by Governor Paul Patton given that  
14 many of the small drinking water systems remain fragmented, poorly subscribed, and  
15 without proper oversight and management.