

1 A RESOLUTION expressing support for the Ohio River Restoration Program Act
2 to advance clean water, economic development, community stability, and expanded
3 recreation opportunities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

4 WHEREAS, the Ohio River watershed spans 15 states and provides drinking water,
5 economic activity, and recreation for more than 30 million people, approximately one in
6 every 10 Americans; and

7 WHEREAS, 97 percent of Kentucky lies within the Ohio River basin, and the river
8 forms approximately 664 miles of the Commonwealth's northern border, more than any
9 other state, making the health of the river and its tributaries essential to Kentucky
10 communities, infrastructure, and economic activity; and

11 WHEREAS, the Ohio River and its tributaries provide drinking water for millions
12 of Kentuckians and support the vast majority of the Commonwealth's public water
13 systems; and

14 WHEREAS, the Ohio River basin underpins a substantial portion of Kentucky's
15 economy, supporting manufacturing, agriculture, energy production, and commercial
16 navigation that moves hundreds of millions of tons of cargo each year and sustains
17 thousands of jobs in the Commonwealth; and

18 WHEREAS, Kentucky's outdoor recreation and tourism economy, including
19 fishing, hunting, boating, paddling, and wildlife viewing, generates approximately \$11.2
20 billion annually in economic activity and supports thousands of jobs in river and rural
21 communities across the Commonwealth; and

22 WHEREAS, investments in watershed restoration across the United States have
23 consistently produced strong economic returns, with studies estimating \$3 to \$6 in
24 economic benefits for every \$1 invested, and as much as \$18 in benefits for every \$1
25 invested in flood resilience, through reduced water treatment costs, increased tourism,
26 improved infrastructure resilience, and enhanced property values; and

27 WHEREAS, the Ohio River basin provides critical natural infrastructure that

1 reduces flooding, supports fish and wildlife habitat, and strengthens the long-term
2 resilience of Kentucky communities facing increasing economic and environmental
3 challenges; and

4 WHEREAS, despite its importance, the Ohio River basin remains the largest
5 watershed in the United States without a dedicated federal restoration program, even as
6 similar initiatives in the Great Lakes and Chesapeake Bay have delivered substantial
7 economic, ecological, and public health benefits; and

8 WHEREAS, the federal Ohio River Restoration Program Act would establish the
9 Ohio River Basin Restoration Program to improve water quality, restore fish and wildlife
10 habitat, reduce flood risk, address invasive species and toxic contamination, and expand
11 recreation, workforce development, and community revitalization across the basin; and

12 WHEREAS, the program would operate as a collaborative, nonregulatory
13 partnership, providing federal resources to support state, local, nonprofit, and
14 community-led restoration projects without creating new permitting requirements or
15 regulatory authorities; and

16 WHEREAS, Kentucky stands to benefit from coordinated restoration investments
17 through improved drinking water quality, lower water treatment costs, revitalized
18 riverfront communities, enhanced fisheries and wildlife habitat, expanded outdoor
19 recreation opportunities, and strengthened long-term economic development and
20 community stability;

21 NOW, THEREFORE,

22 ***Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of***
23 ***Kentucky:***

24 ➔Section 1. The Senate hereby expresses its support for House Resolution 5966
25 and Senate Bill 3796, the Ohio River Restoration Program Act, and recognizes the
26 importance of restoring and protecting the Ohio River Basin to safeguard Kentucky's
27 drinking water, strengthen the Commonwealth's economy, expand outdoor recreation and

1 tourism, and promote long-term prosperity and resilience for Kentucky communities.

2 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate is directed to transmit a copy of this
3 Resolution to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority
4 Leader of the United States Senate, and each member of the Kentucky congressional
5 delegation.