

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 238

Supporting efforts to advance regional and community based water and sanitation needs of Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians as an effective bridge for peace building in the Middle East.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 26, 2003

Mr. ROHRABACHER submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Supporting efforts to advance regional and community based water and sanitation needs of Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians as an effective bridge for peace building in the Middle East.

Whereas water is a scarce resource for Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians which can be symbolized as a “time-bomb” waiting to explode if not defused expeditiously;

Whereas all significant water resources in the Middle East, both surface and groundwater, cross borders and are a shared resource between the people of the region;

Whereas, due to lack of awareness and capacity, insufficient resources have in the past been allocated to protect this resource from pollution by sewage;

Whereas an estimated 45 million cubic meters of untreated sewage percolate into the shared Israeli-Palestinian groundwater called the “Mountain Aquifer”;

Whereas if the current level of pollution of the Mountain Aquifer was to continue for another decade this key source of drinking water for Israelis and Palestinians will be lost and will further exacerbate water scarcity in one of the worlds most water-poor regions;

Whereas the southern channel of the River Jordan, a religiously important river to millions of people all over the world, has been neglected to such an extent that in summer months mostly untreated sewage is all that flows down to its terminal lake, the Dead Sea;

Whereas the Dead Sea, located at the lowest point on earth and as the saltiest body of water on earth, is unique in its therapeutic values and cultural heritage;

Whereas the Dead Sea, due to the diversion of water upstream, such as that which historically flowed down the River Jordan, is now drying up by approximately one yard in depth per year and has shrunk by one third in its surface area in recent years thereby causing major environmental problems in the region;

Whereas the water resources of this region, recognized by all peoples as vital to basic life and due to their shared nature, are therefore an important issue to promote understanding and cooperation among Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians, besides vast tourism and employment opportunities which will result therefrom;

Whereas local community projects, such as “Good Water Makes Good Neighbors” which is supported in part by the United States Government, have brought concrete

partnership and positive results to 11 communities in the Middle East;

Whereas with the advancement of the Middle East peace process it is essential and most effective to involve not only political leaders but local communities dependant on the shared-water resources in peace building efforts;

Whereas a dangerous political impasse has been reached in the region, which urgently requires some tangible development to keep up the momentum for peace developed in June 2003 at Aqaba, Jordan;

Whereas a decision to proceed with the “Red Sea to Dead Sea” project, if proven to be environmentally and economically sound, could provide a tangible and unique opportunity as a catalyst for peace in the region, bringing concomitant benefits of a vast and sustainable supply of drinking water, the saving of the Dead Sea, electric power supply, and incentives for building large tourism facilities with attendant employment, all of which are desperately required in the region; and

Whereas the United States should take the lead in investigating the viability and the implementation of the “Red Sea to Dead Sea” project with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian consent and involvement: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
 2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3            (1) urges the United States Government to in-  
 4        crease its support for the efforts to promote local  
 5        Israeli, Palestinian, and Jordanian community co-  
 6        operation on water issues in order to improve access  
 7        to this vital resource, protect this scarce resource

1 from pollution, rehabilitate the River Jordan and the  
2 Dead Sea, and in the process advance peace in the  
3 Middle East and stimulate tourism and employment  
4 in the region; and

5 (2) urges the United States Government to take  
6 the lead in investigating the viability of and pro-  
7 moting and supporting regional water projects, such  
8 as the “Red Sea to Dead Sea” project and desalina-  
9 tion projects and other water and sanitation projects  
10 which would make accessible large quantities of  
11 water to Jordanians, Israelis, and Palestinians and  
12 save the Dead Sea, and in the process advance peace  
13 in the Middle East and stimulate tourism and em-  
14 ployment in the region.

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