

Rep. Hernandez offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 83.

A resolution to encourage the state of Michigan and the province of Ontario to improve communications between their respective government entities in the event of environmental emergencies and perceived environmental threats.

Whereas, On February 23, 2017, large flames were observed at a facility located in the city of Sarnia, Ontario—located just across the St. Clair River from the city of Port Huron, Michigan—causing much concern from citizens in the St. Clair County area; and

Whereas, Lambton County, Ontario, and St. Clair County, Michigan, are located in very close proximity to each other and share a border on the St. Clair River, a critically important waterway for the economic viability of the area as well as the environmental quality of life for citizens on both sides of the international border; and

Whereas, The citizens of Michigan and Ontario rightfully expect their governments to communicate quickly in the event of an emergency or potential emergency situation; and

Whereas, The current notification procedures were agreed upon between Michigan and Ontario in 1988. Since then, technological advancements have made the speed of communication exponentially faster; and

Whereas, Timely notification to citizens and media outlets is vital to ensure panic is not caused when residents witness situations which appear dangerous; and

Whereas, In the past, governments on both sides of the border have been lacking in the timeliness and effectiveness of their communications with counterparts from the other side of the border; and

Whereas, This body recognizes the work done by the government of Sarnia to set up their Community Awareness Emergency Resource Hotline at 1-855-SARNIA, allowing residents in the 810 area code to sign up for free alerts as well as the My Community Notification Network; and

Whereas, This body recognizes the work done by the government of St. Clair County to set up their Warning Information Notification System; and

Whereas, In order to best serve citizens of both countries, Lambton and St. Clair counties—as well as the state of Michigan as a whole and the province of Ontario as a whole—must maintain a proper line of communication to ensure the quick dissemination of notice regarding potential environmental hazards; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we encourage local, state, and provincial emergency officials in the state of Michigan and the province of Ontario to work together to increase the efficiency of communications between our governments; and be it further

Resolved, That we are committed to working with local officials, as necessary, to improve and update the 1988 Ontario-Michigan Joint Notification Plan of Unanticipated or Accidental Discharges of Pollutants into Shared Waters of the Great Lakes and Interconnecting Channels; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor of Michigan, the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the Clerk of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and the Sarnia-Lambton Member of the Provincial Parliament.