

By: Gallego

H.C.R. No. 186

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, In 1962, Pub. L. No. 87-525 authorized the  
2 construction of an international bridge across the Rio Grande to  
3 join Heath Canyon in Texas with the village of La Linda, Coahuila,  
4 Mexico, for the purpose of transporting refined ore into the United  
5 States from nearby mills in Mexico and to one day facilitate the  
6 movement of tourists interested in visiting the Sierra del Carmen  
7 mountain areas across from Big Bend National Park; and

8           WHEREAS, Since the bridge was constructed, the Texas  
9 Department of Transportation has, without interruption, maintained  
10 Farm-to-Market Road 2627 as a paved two-lane highway for a 28-mile  
11 stretch connecting the bridge to United States Highway 385, which  
12 leads from that junction southward to Big Bend National Park and  
13 northward 40 miles to Marathon and United States Highway 90; and

14           WHEREAS, La Linda Bridge, also known as the Hallie Stillwell  
15 Memorial Bridge, is still in place and is in good repair but cannot  
16 be crossed by vehicles or pedestrians because of barriers and the  
17 placement of "no trespassing" signs at the bridge since 1997  
18 pursuant to orders issued by the governments of the United States of  
19 America and the Republic of Mexico; and

20           WHEREAS, The La Linda international crossing is the only  
21 bridge structure in place and the only point of entry authorized by  
22 public law between the United States ports of entry at Presidio and  
23 Del Rio, a distance of 385 miles; and

24           WHEREAS, The principal owner of the United States section of

1 the international bridge at La Linda, the National Parks  
2 Conservation Association, is prepared to donate its interest in the  
3 bridge and associated properties to the State of Texas through the  
4 General Land Office so that the bridge may be reopened and operated  
5 as a legal border crossing; and

6 WHEREAS, The tourism industries serving scenic and  
7 recreational areas joined by this bridge, including the Big Bend  
8 mountains of Texas and the Sierra del Carmen mountains of Northwest  
9 Coahuila, wish to promote, accommodate, and economically benefit  
10 from cross border tourism but are unable to implement those  
11 objectives if the La Linda crossing is not functioning; and

12 WHEREAS, The safety of tourists wishing to enjoy the area,  
13 the binational scientific cooperation called for under existing  
14 international agreements, and the security and public safety of  
15 communities and citizens on both sides of the international border  
16 would be enhanced by a functioning border crossing at La Linda; and

17 WHEREAS, The State of Coahuila and the commissioners court of  
18 Brewster County, respectively represented by the Instituto de  
19 Turismo and the Big Bend Border Council and joined by a coalition of  
20 local residents and the Big Bend National Park Superintendent, have  
21 twice requested that the Binational Bridges and Border Crossings  
22 working group, which is convened semiannually by the United States  
23 Department of State and the Mexican Secretaria de Relaciones  
24 Exteriores, take the necessary actions to have the bridge and  
25 border crossing at La Linda reopened by the United States and  
26 Mexican federal governments; and

27 WHEREAS, The working group, composed of United States and

1 Mexican federal authorities responsible for authorizing  
2 international ports of entry and required inspections along the  
3 international boundary, will convene again in the coming months to  
4 consider action on either reopening the bridge at La Linda or  
5 ordering its removal; and

6 WHEREAS, It is in the economic, cultural, and security  
7 interest of the State of Texas and the homeland security interest of  
8 the United States of America to have a functioning border crossing  
9 station under the management and control of trained and equipped  
10 law enforcement and public safety officials in the extensive area  
11 known as the Big Bend; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas  
13 hereby express its support and encouragement for the reopening of  
14 the bridge and border crossing at La Linda to accommodate trade and  
15 tourism between Texas and Coahuila, Mexico, and to better protect  
16 residents of both countries and secure the protection of our nation  
17 from threats that might be associated with the illegal crossing of  
18 individuals or materials with a lethal intent; and, be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby urge the General Land  
20 Office to proceed expeditiously with the due diligence needed to  
21 make a determination regarding acceptance of an ownership interest  
22 in La Linda Bridge by the State of Texas; and, be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby urge that the governor,  
24 the Texas Department of Transportation, the secretary of state, the  
25 Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas, the Parks and  
26 Wildlife Department, the Texas Department of Economic Development,  
27 the Texas Historical Commission, and other appropriate state

1 agencies render encouragement and assistance to the General Land  
2 Office as it proceeds in this matter and render encouragement and  
3 assistance as well to Brewster County and to private and public  
4 advocates for tourism in the Big Bend in their efforts to develop a  
5 regional tourism economy in conjunction with a reopened bridge at  
6 La Linda; and, be it further

7         RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby call upon the United  
8 States Department of State to communicate the interest of the State  
9 of Texas in this matter to the government of the Republic of Mexico  
10 and to all other parties participating in decisions relating to  
11 either reopening or removing the bridge at La Linda; and, be it  
12 further

13         RESOLVED, That the legislature hereby respectfully  
14 memorialize the Congress of the United States to initiate whatever  
15 actions are needed to reopen La Linda Bridge as a border crossing;  
16 and, be it further

17         RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
18 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
19 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the  
20 senate of the United States Congress, and to all members of the  
21 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this  
22 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
23 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.