

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.

Gallego

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.C.R. No. 186 was adopted by the House on May 2, 2003, by a non-record vote.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.C.R. No. 186 was adopted by the Senate on May 28, 2003, by a viva-voce vote.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor