

By: Gallegos

H.C.R. No. 186

1 CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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