

By: Madla

S.C.R. No. 37

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 Texas secretary of state forward an
15 official copy of this resolution to the United States secretary of
16 state.