

By: Martinez

H.C.R. No. 137

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Since adoption of the North American Free Trade
2 Agreement (NAFTA), the U.S. trade surplus in agricultural products
3 has declined, and deficits in the fruit and vegetable portion of
4 that trade have worsened significantly as this nation has
5 experienced a flood of NAFTA imports; and

6 WHEREAS, The South Texas produce industry--including growers
7 of commodities such as melons, onions, cabbage, carrots, green
8 peppers, and cucumbers--has steadily lost market share due to
9 Mexican competition, with sometimes devastating consequences, and
10 the Lower Rio Grande Valley has seen a number of its produce growers
11 and vegetable houses go out of business; and

12 WHEREAS, The ability of the South Texas produce industry to
13 engage in international competition has not been helped by a Rio
14 Grande treaty debt that has left South Texas irrigators devastated
15 and short of water supplies even while irrigation has expanded in
16 acreage and intensity in nearby areas of northern Mexico; and

17 WHEREAS, For U.S. producers, regulatory and farming
18 practices are in place that, while expensive, help to ensure the
19 safety of consumers, but put them at an additional competitive
20 disadvantage against growers in Mexico, where farming practices and
21 enforcement of regulatory standards are less rigorous; and

22 WHEREAS, The consequences of these competitive disadvantages
23 are particularly devastating in the South Texas region, where
24 Mexican produce can be dumped at particularly low prices because

1 transportation costs are minimal; and

2 WHEREAS, NAFTA was intended to raise economic prosperity
3 generally, not selectively, and to promote the interests of both
4 consumers and sellers; its failure to accomplish these goals with
5 respect to fruit and vegetable marketing warrants changes in
6 related treaty provisions; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas
8 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States, and the
9 Texas delegation to that congress, to press executive branch and
10 binational trade officials for NAFTA reforms that would establish
11 protections for produce grown in the South Texas region, defined to
12 include San Antonio and areas of the state located to the south of
13 that city, and marketed within that same local region; and, be it
14 further

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