

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 542

WHEREAS, The effects of the fire ant in Texas are costly both in economic and health terms, and it is important for citizens to be aware of the dangers and damage associated with these insects; and

WHEREAS, A native of South America, the red imported fire ant now infests more than 80 million acres in the state, primarily in its eastern two-thirds; in heavily infested areas, fire ants sting more than 50 percent of the human population each year, with children and elderly Texans having the highest sting rate and the greatest risk of severe attacks; the insects are known to invade residences and public buildings, including nursing homes, schools, and other sites where people are at high risk for stings; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that fire ants sting nearly five million Americans every year, and a 2003 poll showed that 81 percent of Texans reported that they have been stung; one percent of the population is hypersensitive to fire ant stings and risks death if untreated; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the health and safety risk, these insects also negatively impact the economy and the environment; a study by Texas A&M University has shown that damage and management of fire ants in the five major urban areas of the state cost more than \$580 million annually, including over \$11 million in electrical equipment destruction; infestation results in structural damage, contaminated water systems, and reduced property values, and Texas homeowners spend up to \$600 per year to control the fire ant population; and

WHEREAS, The state's veterinarians cite these pests as a serious threat to livestock health as well, reporting more than 7,000 fire ant injury cases annually; cattle producers suffer economic losses from cattle injury and death as well as damage to feed and hay; moreover, Texas wildlife is seriously affected by fire ant infestation, and certain waterbird colonies have experienced 100 percent hatchling mortality in fire ant infested areas; and

WHEREAS, The month of April marks the beginning of red imported fire ant treatment season, and it is an especially critical time of year to promote greater awareness of the fire ant issue among the residents of this state; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, hereby recognize April 14, 2005, as Fire Ant Prevention Day in Texas and encourage all citizens to learn about the dangers of fire ants as well as preventive measures available to combat them.

Estes

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 4, 2005.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate