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H.C.R. No. 67

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The State of Texas continues to endure substantial  
2 economic losses due to a prolonged drought that has crippled the  
3 state for nearly two years; the loss of crops and livestock and  
4 drought-induced fires have left the state's farmers and ranchers in  
5 desperate need of continued federal assistance to offset the losses  
6 suffered as a result of this natural disaster; and

7           WHEREAS, The drought has cost the state nearly \$2.5 billion  
8 in total crop loss, more than \$1 billion of which is attributed to a  
9 decrease in the cotton harvest, the state's number one cash crop; in  
10 addition, the latest forecasts for 2006 show the state's wheat  
11 harvest has decreased by more than 60 percent, corn production is  
12 down by 26 percent, soybean production has decreased by more than 30  
13 percent, and the state's production of peanuts and sorghum is  
14 expected to be down by 40 percent; and

15           WHEREAS, An estimated \$1.6 billion in livestock losses, as  
16 well as the rising cost of hay and supplemental feed, have forced  
17 many ranchers to sell their cattle earlier than anticipated, which  
18 will undoubtedly cause a decrease in the beef supply for several  
19 years; all told, the total agricultural loss to the state stands at  
20 more than \$4 billion; and

21           WHEREAS, This dire economic impact is shared by the  
22 businesses that support the agriculture community, specifically  
23 those in rural areas, where projections estimate the loss to be  
24 nearly \$8 billion; the businesses affected include those that

1 provide equipment or machinery, supplies, feed, and professional  
2 services such as veterinarians; and

3 WHEREAS, Adding insult to injury, the drought has resulted in  
4 more than 21,000 fires, burning in excess of two million acres  
5 between January and November, 2006, and contributing to the loss of  
6 5,000 miles of fence and 5,000 cattle in the Panhandle alone; the  
7 fires in the northern regions of the state have certainly  
8 contributed to the diminution in hay production, and the United  
9 States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that 77 percent  
10 of Texas' hay production was lost during the same period; and

11 WHEREAS, To alleviate this financial burden, the Texas  
12 Department of Agriculture will administer a total of \$16.1 million  
13 in assistance received from the USDA to eligible livestock  
14 producers in 216 drought-stressed counties, but with more than \$12  
15 billion in total economic loss as a direct result of the drought,  
16 more assistance is needed; the devastation to crops and livestock  
17 in the number two agricultural state in the nation has put a  
18 financial strain on Texas farmers and ranchers, and it is  
19 imperative that the federal government continue to assist the  
20 individuals and families that have suffered during this time; now,  
21 therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
23 hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to  
24 provide further drought relief to Texas; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
26 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
27 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the

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1 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the  
2 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this  
3 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a  
4 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.