

By: Villarreal

H.C.R. No. 91

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The United States railroad network is a vital link
2 in our nation's transportation system, carrying more than 500
3 million passengers annually and moving a record 1.74 trillion
4 ton-miles of cargo in 2006; in addition, freight and passenger
5 trains operate over 170,000 route miles of track and employ more
6 than 232,000 workers; and

7 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, this vast network is fraught with
8 danger; from January to December 2006, the number of train-related
9 accidents and incidents in the United States totaled 11,789,
10 including 2,579 primarily caused by track defects and human error;
11 1,072 of the total occurred in Texas, with 54 occurring in Bexar
12 County alone, and during the first six months of 2006, Texas was the
13 site of 178 train accidents, the most of any state in the nation;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Moreover, with passenger train accidents accounting
16 for only 4.54 percent of all train-related accidents in 2006, cargo
17 trains may present the most serious threat to public safety; many
18 freight trains transport chemicals and hazardous materials that, in
19 the event of an accident involving a leak or spill, would be
20 devastating to train workers, schools, and neighborhoods located
21 near railroads; and

22 WHEREAS, In June 2004, four people died in Bexar County,
23 Texas, following a two-train collision that emitted chlorine gas;
24 in addition to the fatalities, 49 people were treated for breathing

1 problems and other maladies; the potential danger is so severe, the
2 U.S. Coast Guard warns that within 10 minutes, a cloud from a
3 ruptured tank car can spread two miles, and the U.S. Naval Research
4 lab advises that such a cloud could kill 100,000 people within 30
5 minutes if the incident were to occur in a heavily populated area;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In light of these obvious risks, as our railroads
8 transport record freight totals and a large number of passengers,
9 it is essential that the railroad industry maximize the safety of
10 its employees, customers, passengers, and the communities it
11 serves; a critical step towards accomplishing this goal and
12 minimizing train-related accidents and incidents is to strictly
13 enforce current federal rail regulations; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
15 hereby respectfully request that the Congress of the United States
16 improve public safety by implementing and enforcing stricter
17 federal rail regulations; 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 the 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.