

By: Raymond

H.C.R. No. 239

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Access to safe water is a fundamental human need and
2 basic human right, enshrined in the world's principal human rights
3 treaties such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and
4 Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by 145 countries,
5 including the United States of America; our firm commitment to safe
6 water as a basic right is based on the recognition that as a
7 prerequisite to the fulfillment of all other human rights water is
8 indispensable to the physical and social health of all people; and

9 WHEREAS, Every Texas legislature since 1987 has approved
10 legislation designed to improve water and wastewater services in
11 the colonias, economically distressed communities located
12 primarily in border counties; yet despite these repeated efforts
13 the projects have typically run over schedule and over budget,
14 leaving entire communities as resource-poor as many developing
15 countries, surviving without the minimal services available to most
16 other Americans; and

17 WHEREAS, Without sufficient services, residents of the
18 colonias are forced to rely on alternative, inadequate wastewater
19 disposal methods, such as cesspools, makeshift septic tanks, and
20 outhouses; in addition, simple weather events such as rainstorms
21 cause sewage to pool on the ground creating serious public health
22 hazards, including respiratory disease outbreaks of epidemic
23 proportions; the potential consequences extend well beyond the
24 colonias, as evidenced by Environmental Protection Agency research

1 indicating that the underdevelopment of wastewater treatment
2 facilities along the U.S.-Mexico border is responsible for 27
3 million gallons of untreated wastewater discharged directly into
4 the Rio Grande each day; and

5 WHEREAS, In 2005 the Texas Water Development Board reported
6 that upgraded infrastructure was still needed to provide drinking
7 water and wastewater services to the colonias and their
8 approximately 300,000 residents, including the approximately 1,300
9 colonias in the border region; likewise, a December 2006 report by
10 the Texas secretary of state noted that many colonias are still in
11 need of basic water and wastewater services and also noted serious
12 health risks posed by the lack of proper drainage and flood control;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Twenty years have passed since the first legislative
15 initiatives designed to provide colonia residents what other Texans
16 take for granted, and still many projects are unfinished; among
17 these is the colonia water project intended to serve the more than
18 4,000 Webb County colonia residents located along State Highway 359
19 and Mines Road; nearly seven years after the project's inception,
20 almost 80 percent of the water and wastewater connections remain
21 uncompleted, causing deplorable but avoidable conditions to
22 persist, even while other Webb County colonias were granted money
23 for similar water projects in March of this year; now, therefore, be
24 it

25 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
26 hereby respectfully urge the Texas Water Development Board to
27 accelerate implementation of the colonia water project at State

1 Highway 359 and Mines Road; and, be it further

2 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
3 copies of this resolution to the executive administrator of the
4 Texas Water Development Board, the Laredo Waterworks System, the
5 managing director of the North American Development Bank, the
6 operations director of the Border Environment Cooperation
7 Commission, and the regional colonia ombudsman of Webb County.

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