

By: Hegar

S.R. No. 1084

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Barge transportation and the inland waterways are of vital importance to the movement of cargo in the United States; over 1.2 billion tons are hauled annually along the nation's system of shallow draft channels; and

WHEREAS, Inland barge traffic, where feasible, is among the most energy-efficient modes of transporting bulk commodities, yielding approximately 500 ton-miles of goods shipment per gallon of fuel, as opposed to 200 ton-miles and 60 ton-miles for rail and truck traffic, with associated advantages in terms of reduced hydrocarbon and other emissions; and

WHEREAS, Along the Gulf Coast of Texas, one of the most valuable shallow draft arteries is the Victoria Barge Canal, which extends approximately 35 miles from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway at San Antonio Bay to the Pickering Turning Basin south of the city of Victoria; and

WHEREAS, Completed in 1968, with a navigable depth of nine feet and a width of 100 feet, the canal underwent improvement between 1995 and 2002, by which it was enlarged to a depth of 12 feet and a width of 125 feet, matching the parameters of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway; and

WHEREAS, The Port of Victoria, located with its industrial park at the inland terminus, combines with other facilities along the canal to contribute 9,000 jobs, generate \$1.2 billion in

annual revenue, and produce over \$52 million each year in state and local taxes derivative of marine terminal activity; and

WHEREAS, Ideally situated for purposes of intermodal shipments, the canal and port have proximity to Houston, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi and serve as a convenient hub with links to Union Pacific and other railroads and to United States Highways 59, 77, and 87, as well as I-10, I-37, and I-35; and

WHEREAS, Historically, the Victoria Barge Canal has been maintained and dredged by the United States Army Corps of Engineers; federal funding for such purposes is secure through fiscal year 2007, but not for fiscal year 2008 or thereafter because of an inexplicable spending cut by the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS, Continued federal support for the facility is vital to its operation and serves worthy goals of transportation efficiency, regional and state economic vitality, and commercial trade both domestically and with our international neighbors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 80th Legislature, hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to restore federal maintenance and dredging funds for the Victoria Barge Canal for fiscal year 2008 and beyond; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of the senate forward official copies of this Resolution to the president of the United States, to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate of the United States Congress, and to all

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the members of the Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.