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H.C.R. No. 75

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The Lower Rio Grande Valley region of Texas is one of
2 the state's treasured gems; a well-known agricultural center, the
3 valley also boasts a dynamic economy, a unique border culture, and
4 some of the most biologically diverse habitats in the country; yet
5 the construction of a fence along the Texas-Mexico border is
6 putting the very viability of the area at stake; and

7 WHEREAS, The Secure Fence Act of 2006 calls for "at least two
8 layers of reinforced fencing, the installation of additional
9 physical barriers, roads, lighting, cameras, and sensors" along
10 more than 700 miles of the southern border of the United States,
11 including the last 100 miles of the Rio Grande; the stated goal of
12 the act is to "achieve operational control over U.S. international
13 land and maritime borders," but even the Department of Homeland
14 Security concedes that fencing will not stop illegal crossings and
15 that, at best, it will merely slow crossers down; and

16 WHEREAS, A border wall would negatively impact a broad array
17 of valley residents; farmers would be cut off from their primary
18 source of water, the Rio Grande, and business owners would lose a
19 significant portion of their customer base, Mexican nationals who
20 cross the border year-round to shop; many landowners would be
21 forced to relinquish their property, and a considerable number of
22 valley residents would be separated from relatives on the other
23 side of the river; and

24 WHEREAS, Perhaps most vulnerable of all would be the natural

1 environment; millions of dollars and countless hours of work have
2 been spent restoring the river corridor; such protected sites as
3 the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, the Bentsen-Rio Grande
4 Valley State Park and World Birding Center, Sabal Palm Audubon
5 Center and Sanctuary, the NABA International Butterfly Park, and
6 the Lennox Foundation Southmost Preserve today support 20
7 endangered species and provide a vital stopover for millions of
8 migrating birds, bats, and butterflies; and

9 WHEREAS, The area draws nearly 200,000 wildlife tourists each
10 year, bringing some \$150 million into otherwise impoverished
11 communities; the erection of a fence in this region would directly
12 impact critical wildlife habitat, increase soil erosion along the
13 floodplain, and eliminate wildlife access to the Rio Grande, the
14 only reliable source of fresh water around; and

15 WHEREAS, The Congressional Research Service estimates that a
16 700-mile fence, including repairs and maintenance, would cost up to
17 \$49 billion over the course of 25 years; for a relatively
18 inefficient method of border security, this is simply not a sound
19 investment of taxpayer funds; in addition, our federal officials
20 must be made to realize that erecting a border fence will send a
21 flagrantly undiplomatic message to Mexico and will bring
22 irrevocable cultural, economic, and ecological losses to the Rio
23 Grande Valley; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
25 hereby urge the Congress of the United States to explore
26 alternative means to border security in South Texas other than the
27 fencing described in the Secure Fence Act; and, be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
2 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
3 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
4 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the
5 Texas delegation to the congress with the request that this
6 resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a
7 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.