

1-1 By: Guillen (Senate Sponsor - Uresti) H.C.R. No. 120
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 20, 2009;
1-3 May 21, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on Natural
1-4 Resources; May 23, 2009, reported favorably by the following vote:
1-5 Yeas 9, Nays 0; May 23, 2009, sent to printer.)

1-6 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-7 WHEREAS, South Texas is on the front line of the battle
1-8 against the fever tick, a pest that threatens to inflict
1-9 catastrophic losses on the beef industry should it continue to
1-10 spread beyond a permanent quarantine zone established along the Rio
1-11 Grande in 1943; and

1-12 WHEREAS, Historically, the fever tick ranged across the
1-13 entire southeastern United States, reaching as far north as
1-14 Maryland and Pennsylvania; the tick can carry and transmit a
1-15 parasite that causes cattle tick fever, which kills up to 90 percent
1-16 of infected cattle; in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission was
1-17 founded to fight this scourge, and in 1907 the United States
1-18 Department of Agriculture established the National Cattle Fever
1-19 Tick Eradication Program; by then, the tick had already caused
1-20 direct and indirect economic losses estimated to equal more than \$1
1-21 billion in today's dollars; and

1-22 WHEREAS, The eradication program had successfully contained
1-23 the fever tick to an 852-square-mile quarantine zone by 1943; the
1-24 tick was never eliminated in Mexico, however, and personnel from
1-25 the USDA Tick Force have maintained a high level of vigilance to
1-26 fight continuous reintroduction; after the pest was detected beyond
1-27 the zone in 2007, five temporary preventive quarantine areas were
1-28 established, covering more than one million acres in Starr, Zapata,
1-29 Jim Hogg, Maverick, Dimmit, and Webb Counties; and

1-30 WHEREAS, In March 2008, the Texas Department of Agriculture
1-31 requested some \$13 million to fight the spread of fever ticks; the
1-32 USDA released \$5.2 million, and in January 2009 it committed
1-33 another \$4.9 million in emergency funds, but sustained funding over
1-34 the long term is essential; moreover, the National Fever Tick
1-35 Eradication Strategic Plan, developed and approved by the USDA in
1-36 2006, has never been implemented and funded, and Dr. Bob Hillman,
1-37 the state veterinarian and executive director of the Texas Animal
1-38 Health Commission, has warned that fever ticks are a national
1-39 livestock threat that requires an all-out assault; and

1-40 WHEREAS, The fever tick has gained substantial ground in this
1-41 state, but the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Animal
1-42 Health Commission, and the USDA Tick Force continue working
1-43 diligently with cattle owners to save a key component of the Lone
1-44 Star State's agricultural economy and prevent the battlefront from
1-45 extending to other states; if the fever tick is not contained, the
1-46 cost to the cattle industry could easily approach \$1 billion a year
1-47 and lead to rising food costs for consumers; now, therefore, be it

1-48 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
1-49 hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to make
1-50 eradication of the fever tick in South Texas a priority and continue
1-51 to provide appropriate funding and resources for this effort; and,
1-52 be it further

1-53 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
1-54 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
1-55 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
1-56 senate of the United States Congress, and to all members of the
1-57 Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution
1-58 be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to
1-59 the Congress of the United States of America.

1-60 * * * * *