

By: Howard of Travis

H.C.R. No. 177

Substitute the following for H.C.R. No. 177:

By: Farrar

C.S.H.C.R. No. 177

#### HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The arrival of the 2009 ozone season brings critical  
2 challenges for Central and South Central Texas, where rapid  
3 population growth threatens to compromise air quality by raising  
4 ozone-forming emissions; and

5 WHEREAS, High levels of ground-level ozone can be a health  
6 hazard, especially for children, seniors, and people who suffer  
7 from lung disease or are active outdoors; studies link excessive  
8 ozone exposure to lung irritation and inflammation, breathing  
9 difficulties, headaches, nausea, aggravated asthma, reduced lung  
10 capacity, and increased susceptibility to such respiratory  
11 illnesses as pneumonia and bronchitis; chronic high-level exposure  
12 can cause permanent lung damage; and

13 WHEREAS, To protect the health and well-being of the public,  
14 the Environmental Protection Agency strengthened its National  
15 Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone in 2008;  
16 monitored ozone levels in the Capital Region, which includes  
17 Travis, Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, and Williamson Counties, and in  
18 the Alamo Region, which includes Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, and  
19 Wilson Counties, slightly exceeded the new standards in 2006-2008,  
20 putting the area at risk of receiving a "nonattainment" designation  
21 when the EPA makes its final determinations in March 2010; this  
22 designation would trigger federal requirements for transportation  
23 and industry that could in turn increase costs for businesses and  
24 delay regionally significant transportation projects; and

1       WHEREAS, The Capital and Alamo Regions can avert the  
2 nonattainment designation if they decrease ozone levels to 77 parts  
3 per billion or less and 78 parts per billion or less, respectively;  
4 an unprecedented level of regional cooperation is needed to meet  
5 this goal; consequently, the Central Texas Clean Air Coalition, the  
6 Air Improvement Resources Committee, local governments in the two  
7 regions, the Capital Area Council of Governments, the Alamo Area  
8 Council of Governments, and the CLEAN AIR Force of Central Texas  
9 have created an initiative called the Big Push to build on voluntary  
10 efforts already in place; and

11       WHEREAS, In support of the Big Push, the Central and South  
12 Central Texas regions are implementing an outreach campaign to  
13 encourage everyone to be an Ozone Action Hero and to pledge to do  
14 what they can to voluntarily reduce ozone-forming emissions from  
15 April through October 2009; and

16       WHEREAS, Because many small actions can combine to produce a  
17 significant result, the coalition is asking all area governments,  
18 agencies, businesses, and citizens for their assistance;  
19 individuals can help through such measures as driving less, idling  
20 their vehicles less, and waiting until evening to fuel vehicles or  
21 use gas and diesel yard equipment; many area employers have  
22 committed to join this effort by establishing policies to reduce  
23 their vehicle and operational emissions and by implementing such  
24 measures as ozone watch/warning programs and assisting employees in  
25 reducing the impact of their commutes through teleworking,  
26 carpooling, using mass transit, bicycling, or scheduling a  
27 compressed workweek; and

1       WHEREAS, The largest employer in the Central Texas region is  
2 the State of Texas; state agencies can play a vital role in the Big  
3 Push by conducting evaluations of fleet usage, providing secure  
4 bike racks and preferential parking for ride sharing and  
5 low-emissions vehicles, choosing to teleconference, limiting use  
6 of gas and diesel equipment early in the day and on ozone  
7 watch/warning days, and enacting other policies to reduce harmful  
8 emissions; and

9       WHEREAS, By joining the Big Push to reduce ozone-forming  
10 emissions in Central and South Central Texas, the state can protect  
11 the health of residents and help avoid a nonattainment designation  
12 from the EPA, thus preventing enforcement of burdensome regulatory  
13 requirements that would add to the cost of doing business in Central  
14 and South Central Texas; now, therefore, be it

15       RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas  
16 hereby direct all state agencies to immediately initiate voluntary  
17 emission reduction policies and programs if possible in order to  
18 help Central and South Central Texas meet the 2008 National Ambient  
19 Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone; and, be it further

20       RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward an official  
21 copy of this resolution to the executive director of each state  
22 agency.