

By: Watson

S.C.R. No. 60

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, State agencies can also contribute to the endeavor
10 by publicizing the Texas State Employee Commute Solutions Fair,
11 which is to be held from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22,
12 2009, at the Stephen F. Austin State Office Building, and by
13 encouraging employees to attend the fair; and

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

20 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
21 hereby direct all state agencies to initiate emission reduction
22 policies and programs in order to help Central and South Central
23 Texas meet the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standard for
24 ground-level ozone; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the secretary of state forward an official
26 copy of this resolution to the executive director of each state
27 agency.