

By: Deshotel

H.R. No. 200

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Hilton Kelley of Port Arthur has been named a
2 recipient of the 2011 Goldman Environmental Prize, an
3 accomplishment that is truly worthy of celebration; and

4 WHEREAS, Created in 1990 by Richard and Rhoda Goldman, the
5 Goldman Environmental Prize honors individuals from around the
6 world who are working at the local level to protect and enhance the
7 natural environment; through their grassroots efforts, these
8 community leaders have helped to empower their fellow citizens and
9 have inspired many to stand up for their rights; the prize is
10 awarded annually in April to one individual from each of the six
11 inhabited regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South and
12 Central America, and the islands and island nations; in addition to
13 providing the recipients with enhanced credibility and
14 international recognition for their causes, the prize includes
15 financial support of \$150,000 to assist them in pursuing their
16 work, making this the world's largest award honoring grassroots
17 environmentalists; and

18 WHEREAS, Hilton Kelley was recognized with this prestigious
19 accolade for his efforts to fight pollution in his community and to
20 secure environmental justice for residents along the Texas Gulf
21 Coast; a Port Arthur native, Mr. Kelley was raised in the city's
22 West Side, a predominately African American neighborhood that has
23 long stood in the shadow of the area's many oil refineries and
24 chemical plants; after graduating from high school he enlisted in

1 the U.S. Navy; his service took him to the San Francisco Bay area,
2 where he remained after his discharge from the navy as a petty
3 officer second class; based in Oakland, California, he found work
4 as an actor and stuntman in television and the movies and was
5 admitted to the Screen Actors Guild in 1991; he also served his
6 community as a youth activist and helped lead efforts to end gang
7 violence; and

8 WHEREAS, On a visit to his hometown in 2000, Mr. Kelley found
9 his former community in steep decline, wracked by poverty and
10 rampant crime and plagued by pollution; the U.S. Environmental
11 Protection Agency has noted that Port Arthur has some of the highest
12 levels of toxic air releases in the country, and the companies
13 operating the plants have been cited with hundreds of air pollution
14 violations; the effects of the emissions have been particularly
15 evident in the West Side neighborhood, where Mr. Kelley discovered
16 many people ill with a variety of maladies and suffering from some
17 of the highest asthma and cancer rates in the state; with few job
18 prospects, however, and with property values that have plummeted
19 due to the continued expansion of the chemical plants, most West
20 Side residents have had no avenue of escape; faced with these harsh
21 facts, Mr. Kelley was inspired to move back to Port Arthur to help
22 its citizens rebuild; and

23 WHEREAS, Since returning to Port Arthur, Mr. Kelley has
24 launched a number of initiatives that have had a significant impact
25 on his community; he realized early on that the city's severe
26 environmental problems would have to be addressed in order to
27 improve economic and social conditions; to this end, he established

1 the Community In-Power and Development Association (CIDA), an
2 organization that strives to empower citizens by training them to
3 monitor emissions and air quality and by educating them about
4 pollution and their rights; CIDA also advocates in behalf of the
5 community by pushing for stricter environmental regulation and by
6 challenging the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas
7 Commission on Environmental Quality to enforce such existing laws
8 as the Clean Air Act; and

9 WHEREAS, Among his many accomplishments, Mr. Kelley led a
10 campaign that resulted in the Motiva Refinery installing
11 state-of-the-art equipment to reduce emissions when it expanded its
12 facility; he also helped negotiate an agreement with the company
13 that included the provision of three years of health coverage for
14 people in the West Side neighborhood and that led to the
15 establishment of a \$3.5 million fund to spur community development
16 and provide job training; in addition, he guided the successful
17 effort to prevent 20,000 tons of toxic chemicals from Mexico from
18 being brought to Port Arthur for incineration; and

19 WHEREAS, Along with overseeing the work of CIDA, this notable
20 Texan serves on the EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory
21 Council, and he speaks extensively on the environment and social
22 justice; he has been the recipient of numerous honors, including
23 the 2003 Environmental Justice Award from the Lone Star Chapter of
24 the Sierra Club, a 2004 Ben and Jerry's Award for Environmental
25 Activism, a 2006 Houston Hero Award from the Citizens League for
26 Environmental Action Now, and a 2009 Houston-Galveston
27 Environmental Research and Outreach Award from The University of

1 Texas Medical Branch; and

2 WHEREAS, With his continuing advocacy for clean air and
3 environmental justice, Hilton Kelley has made a positive difference
4 in the lives of many Texans, and he is an inspiring example of the
5 exceptional good that one person can accomplish; now, therefore, be
6 it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
8 Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby congratulate Hilton Kelley
9 on receiving the Goldman Environmental Prize and extend to him
10 sincere best wishes for continued success in all his endeavors;
11 and, be it further

12 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
13 prepared for Mr. Kelley as an expression of high regard by the Texas
14 House of Representatives.