

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Castner Range in El Paso is one of the most  
2 rugged and pristine landscapes in Texas, encompassing 7,000 acres  
3 of undeveloped desert and foothills; and

4           WHEREAS, The land was previously known as the Castner Range  
5 Complex at Fort Bliss and was used as a United States Army artillery  
6 range, but the Department of Defense ceased operations there in  
7 1971; unexploded ordnance remained behind, rendering the land  
8 unsuitable for development, and under the stewardship of the army,  
9 it has been allowed to rest in its natural state; and

10          WHEREAS, Since 1995, the army has been clearing old artillery  
11 rounds from the surface of the land; surface clearance, as opposed  
12 to subsurface clearance, was found to offer the best  
13 risk-reduction-to-cost ratio and is most compatible with a  
14 minimal-disturbance future land use, such as passive recreation on  
15 protected parkland; and

16          WHEREAS, Although the Castner Range is off-limits to the  
17 public, El Pasoans have long cherished the area for its surpassing  
18 beauty; bordering Franklin Mountains State Park on the west, the  
19 range contains some of the most geologically complex and visually  
20 striking parts of the Franklins and is prized for its Mexican gold  
21 poppy, which carpets the lower slopes in brilliant color in the  
22 spring; and

23          WHEREAS, Also remarkable for its biodiversity, Castner Range  
24 provides a number of distinctive animal habitats, and its unique

1 soils and location combine to make this the only known site in Texas  
2 where several rare plants can be found; moreover, the range holds  
3 the greatest concentration of springs in the Franklins, supporting  
4 unexpectedly lush pockets of vegetation; and

5 WHEREAS, Castner Range is further distinguished by military  
6 history and archaeological sites; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1981, the Texas Legislature provided for the  
8 adjustment of the boundaries of Franklin Mountains State Park in  
9 anticipation of the future addition of Castner Range lands, an idea  
10 strongly favored by area residents; both the El Paso City Council  
11 and the El Paso County Commissioners Court unanimously passed  
12 resolutions in recent years advocating that the Castner Range be  
13 left undeveloped and be conserved for recreational use;  
14 furthermore, the Franklin Mountains State Park management plan  
15 takes the range into account, envisioning a network of trails in the  
16 canyons and lower elevations, and the U.S. Department of Defense  
17 recently made a \$300,000 grant to the Frontera Land Alliance to  
18 collect data concerning a conservation conveyance for the area; and

19 WHEREAS, The Castner Range is one of the Lone Star State's  
20 unequalled treasures, and its conservation will provide enormous  
21 benefits to future generations of Texans; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas  
23 Legislature hereby express its support for the conservation of  
24 Castner Range; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the chief clerk of the Texas House of  
26 Representatives forward official copies of this resolution to the  
27 president of the United States, to the commanding general of Fort

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1 Bliss, to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Defense, to the  
2 president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
3 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the  
4 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that  
5 this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a  
6 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

Marquez  
Pickett  
Quintanilla  
Margo  
Gonzalez

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 306 was adopted by the House on May 3, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting.

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Chief Clerk of the House