

By: Deshotel

H.R. No. 2807

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 Africa,  
11 Asia, Europe, North America, South and Central America, and the  
12 islands and island nations; in addition to providing the recipients  
13 with international recognition for their causes, the prize includes  
14 financial support of \$150,000 to assist them in pursuing their  
15 work, making this the world's largest award honoring grassroots  
16 environmentalists; and

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

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

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

21       WHEREAS, Since returning to Port Arthur, Mr. Kelley has  
22 launched a number of initiatives that have had a significant impact  
23 in his community; recognizing that the city's severe environmental  
24 problems would have to be addressed in order to improve economic and  
25 social conditions, he established the Community In-Power and  
26 Development Association (CIDA), an organization that strives to  
27 empower citizens by training them to monitor emissions and air

1 quality and by educating them about pollution and their rights;  
2 CIDA also advocates in behalf of the community by pushing for  
3 stricter environmental regulation and by challenging the U.S.  
4 Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on  
5 Environmental Quality to enforce existing laws; and

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

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

26       WHEREAS, With his continuing advocacy for clean air and  
27 environmental justice, Hilton Kelley has made a positive difference

1 in the lives of countless Texans, and he is an inspiring example of  
2 the exceptional good that one person can accomplish; now,  
3 therefore, be it

4         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas  
5 Legislature hereby congratulate Hilton Kelley on his receipt of the  
6 2011 Goldman Environmental Prize and extend to him sincere best  
7 wishes for continued success in all his endeavors; and, be it  
8 further

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