

1-1 By: Rodriguez S.R. No. 506
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 14, 2011; March 28, 2011, read
1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Veteran Affairs and
1-4 Military Installations; April 19, 2011, reported adversely, with
1-5 favorable Committee Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 3,
1-6 Nays 0; April 19, 2011, sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.R. No. 506 By: Rodriguez

1-8 SENATE RESOLUTION

1-9 WHEREAS, The Castner Range in El Paso is one of the most
1-10 rugged and pristine landscapes in Texas, encompassing 7,000 acres
1-11 of undeveloped desert and foothills; and

1-12 WHEREAS, The land was previously known as the Castner Range
1-13 Complex at Fort Bliss and was used as a United States Army artillery
1-14 range, but the Department of Defense ceased operations there in
1-15 1971; unexploded ordnance remained behind, rendering the land
1-16 unsuitable for development, and under the stewardship of the army,
1-17 it has been allowed to rest in its natural state; and

1-18 WHEREAS, Since 1995, the army has been clearing old artillery
1-19 rounds from the surface of the land; surface clearance, as opposed
1-20 to subsurface clearance, was found to offer the best
1-21 risk-reduction-to-cost ratio and is most compatible with a
1-22 minimal-disturbance future land use, such as passive recreation on
1-23 protected parkland; and

1-24 WHEREAS, Although the Castner Range is off-limits to the
1-25 public, El Pasoans have long cherished the area for its surpassing
1-26 beauty; bordering Franklin Mountains State Park on the west, the
1-27 range contains some of the most geologically complex and visually
1-28 striking parts of the Franklins and is prized for its Mexican gold
1-29 poppy, which carpets the lower slopes in brilliant color in the
1-30 spring; and

1-31 WHEREAS, Also remarkable for its biodiversity, Castner Range
1-32 provides a number of distinctive animal habitats, and its unique
1-33 soils and location combine to make this the only known site in Texas
1-34 where several rare plants can be found; moreover, the range holds
1-35 the greatest concentration of springs in the Franklins, supporting
1-36 unexpectedly lush pockets of vegetation; and

1-37 WHEREAS, Castner Range is further distinguished by military
1-38 history and archaeological sites; and

1-39 WHEREAS, In 1981, the Texas Legislature provided for the
1-40 adjustment of the boundaries of Franklin Mountains State Park in
1-41 anticipation of the future addition of Castner Range lands, an idea
1-42 strongly favored by area residents; both the El Paso City Council
1-43 and the El Paso County Commissioners Court unanimously passed
1-44 resolutions in recent years advocating that the Castner Range be
1-45 left undeveloped and be conserved for recreational use;
1-46 furthermore, the Franklin Mountains State Park management plan
1-47 takes the range into account, envisioning a network of trails in the
1-48 canyons and lower elevations, and the United States Department of
1-49 Defense recently made a \$300,000 grant to the Frontera Land
1-50 Alliance to collect data concerning a conservation conveyance for
1-51 the area; and

1-52 WHEREAS, The Castner Range is one of the Lone Star State's
1-53 unequalled treasures, and its conservation will provide enormous
1-54 benefits to future generations of Texans; now, therefore, be it

1-55 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd
1-56 Legislature, hereby express its support for the conservation of
1-57 Castner Range; and, be it further

1-58 RESOLVED, That the secretary of the senate forward official
1-59 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
1-60 the commanding general of Fort Bliss, to the secretary of the United
1-61 States Department of Defense, to the president of the Senate and the
1-62 speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States
1-63 Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress

2-1 with the request that this resolution be entered in the
2-2 Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United
2-3 States of America.

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