

By: Raymond

H.C.R. No. 123

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Since the advent of the North American Free Trade
2 Agreement in 1994, Laredo has contended with growing
3 responsibilities for national security, but still remains
4 ineligible for federal Targeted Infrastructure Capability grants
5 because the city falls short of the population criteria on which the
6 grants are primarily based; and

7 WHEREAS, The gateway for the nation's main NAFTA corridor,
8 Laredo has four International Bridges and is in the process of
9 applying for a Presidential Permit to build a fifth; the city is the
10 busiest inland port in the United States, with nearly 3 million
11 tractor-trailer crossings and more than 400,000 rail crossings
12 annually as of 2008; in addition, the Laredo Airport, a former U.S.
13 Air Force Base, handled more than 429 million pounds of freight in
14 2010 alone; and

15 WHEREAS, Half of all NAFTA-related trade through Texas enters
16 via Laredo, and half of that trade involves hazardous materials;
17 each day, the city's first responders face the possibility of a
18 chemical spill or hazardous materials release; the city also has
19 over 60 million square feet of warehouse space, at least a quarter
20 of which contains hazardous materials and is vulnerable to
21 terrorism; more than 15,000 visitors cross into Laredo every day,
22 and the police department confronts an escalating threat from
23 violent international drug traffickers, who frequently possess
24 caches of state-of-the-art weapons along with sophisticated

1 communications systems; and

2 WHEREAS, Relatively isolated on its side of the border,
3 Laredo is approximately 150 miles from the nearest United States
4 community with the capability to assist in an emergency situation,
5 and its police, fire, and public health personnel are the primary
6 emergency responders for the entire region; since the attacks of
7 September 11, 2001, the police department has provided increased
8 security for many facilities, among them all the ports of entry and
9 interstate commerce corridors IH-35 and U.S. Highway 59; moreover,
10 Laredo provides primary first response for incidents on the Rio
11 Grande, and as the river is the chief drinking water source for
12 Laredo, Nuevo Laredo, and other communities in the valley, swift
13 response to any contamination is extremely critical; and

14 WHEREAS, With an estimated population of about 240,000,
15 Laredo is a much smaller city than other major United States ports;
16 its own budget is accordingly limited, and at the same time, its
17 size has been an impediment in the pursuit of federal assistance;
18 increased federal funding is desperately needed to strengthen
19 readiness where local agencies with strained budgets are not
20 adequate to protect our nation's critical infrastructure and
21 address international threats; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the 83rd Legislature of the State of Texas
23 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to revise
24 Department of Homeland Security funding formulas for Targeted
25 Infrastructure Capability grants to include a separate threat
26 assessment for strategically located border communities,
27 regardless of population; and, be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
2 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
3 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
4 Representatives of the United States Congress, to the secretary of
5 the Department of Homeland Security, and to all the members of the
6 Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution
7 be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to
8 the Congress of the United States of America.