

By: Guillen

H.C.R. No. 131

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Drought conditions, natural disasters, and
2 overharvesting have had a negative impact on the state's oyster
3 population, but the certificate of location program administered by
4 the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides a valuable
5 mitigating effect; and

6 WHEREAS, Designation of an oyster bed as private is achieved
7 through a certificate of location, sometimes referred to as a
8 private oyster lease; the holder of the certificate has the ability
9 to protect his or her oysters from poaching during the time period
10 covered by the certificate; and

11 WHEREAS, Decades ago, Texas Parks and Wildlife was granted
12 exclusive authority to designate an oyster bed as private in order
13 to discourage oyster harvesters from fishing in areas of Galveston
14 Bay closed by the state health department; as filter feeders,
15 however, oysters have the ability to purge themselves of
16 contaminants if they are relocated to safe waters; a certificate of
17 location gives the holder the right to move oysters from restricted
18 or polluted waters to a specific location to allow for the
19 depuration of the oysters to meet the consumption standards set by
20 the Texas Department of State Health Services; and

21 WHEREAS, Coastal fishery experts have found that the
22 certificate of location program is beneficial to both the
23 \$3 billion oyster industry and to the public; private lease owners
24 have the assurance that they will reap the benefits earned by the

1 careful cultivation of their oyster beds, while consumers have
2 greater confidence that their oysters are safe to eat; moreover, by
3 naturally removing contaminants from their environment, oysters
4 enhance recreation, tourism, and businesses that rely on clear gulf
5 water; and

6 WHEREAS, At present, the certificate of location program
7 encompasses only a few leases within just one bay, and current
8 leases are due to expire in 2017; by extending and expanding the
9 program, Texas Parks and Wildlife can help revitalize a struggling
10 resource and contribute immeasurably to the future health of an
11 industry; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
13 hereby urge the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to extend and
14 expand its certificate of location program for oyster harvesting;
15 and, be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward an
17 official copy of this resolution to the Texas Parks and Wildlife
18 Commission.