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H.R. No. 1087

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The year 2017 marks the 150th anniversary of the  
2 Chisholm Trail, the major cattle-drive route from Texas to Kansas  
3 that was used from 1867 to 1884; and

4           WHEREAS, In the mid-1800s, Texas was home to millions of  
5 longhorn cattle, many of them roaming freely on sparsely populated  
6 rangeland; there was a growing demand for beef in other parts of the  
7 United States, but Texans lacked an easy means of getting the cattle  
8 to market because rail routes between the Lone Star State and the  
9 eastern United States had yet to be established; early attempts to  
10 drive longhorns to Missouri and Kansas were halted when those  
11 states closed their borders to the cattle to prevent transmission  
12 of a deadly livestock disease, though the Texas cattle were later  
13 allowed to traverse a less-populated part of Kansas; and

14           WHEREAS, In 1867, Illinois entrepreneur Joseph G. McCoy  
15 solved the dilemma by persuading the Kansas Pacific Railway to lay a  
16 spur to the small town of Abilene, Kansas, where he built a hotel,  
17 stockyard, office, and bank; he advertised the availability of the  
18 railhead throughout Texas, and O. W. Wheeler and his partners drove  
19 the first 2,400 steers to Abilene from San Antonio in 1867,  
20 traveling north through Texas and across the Indian Territory that  
21 later became the state of Oklahoma; and

22           WHEREAS, Some 35,000 cattle were shipped through Abilene in  
23 the first year and the total doubled annually until 1871, reaching a  
24 peak of 600,000; the popular route from Texas was originally known

1 by such names as the Kansas Trail, the Abilene Trail, or McCoy's  
2 Trail; the name Chisholm Trail was initially used only for the  
3 section north of the Red River, but it was soon applied to the  
4 entire path from the Rio Grande to Abilene and, later, to other  
5 towns in Kansas; and

6       WHEREAS, Typically beginning in the early spring, the cattle  
7 drives traveled north along the trail, taking three to four months  
8 to reach Kansas; the herds moved at a pace of 10 to 12 miles a day,  
9 guided by a crew that was often made up of a dozen or more people,  
10 including a trail boss, cowboys, and a chuck wagon cook; a day on  
11 the trail could contain the excitement and danger of stampedes and  
12 river crossings as well as many hours of hard and dusty work that  
13 was a good deal less dramatic; and

14       WHEREAS, The trail ultimately moved more than five million  
15 cattle and one million mustangs, playing a crucial role in reviving  
16 the Texas economy after the Civil War; the expansion of the  
17 railroads, the growing settlement of the Plains, and the  
18 establishment of new livestock quarantines brought an end to the  
19 cattle drives in the mid-1880s, but during its years of operation,  
20 the Chisholm Trail gained a special place in Western lore, and it  
21 remains a source of fascination today; now, therefore, be it

22       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 85th Texas  
23 Legislature hereby commemorate the 150th anniversary of the  
24 Chisholm Trail.