

By: Hinojosa, Garcia

S.C.R. No. 37

1                                 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2                 WHEREAS, Seaport activities generate more than \$4 trillion in  
3 economic activity each year, representing more than a quarter of  
4 United States gross domestic product and yielding more than \$41  
5 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue; and

6                 WHEREAS, To support this critical component of international  
7 trade, the United States Congress established the Harbor  
8 Maintenance Tax (HMT) on shippers in 1986 as a means of funding the  
9 maintenance and improvement of vital harbor infrastructure; and

10                 WHEREAS, HMT revenues deposited into the Harbor Maintenance  
11 Trust Fund now total about \$1.6 billion annually, but in recent  
12 years, Congress has appropriated less than half of those funds for  
13 the intended purpose, leading to a decline in dredging and  
14 maintenance by the United States Army Corps of Engineers; the  
15 consequence is an accumulation of sediment that leaves navigation  
16 channels narrower and shallower, and when silted channels constrain  
17 vessels from carrying full loads or force them to wait for high  
18 tide, the costs of imports and exports rise, as does the risk of  
19 vessel grounding and associated oil spills; the Corps of Engineers  
20 has estimated that the full depth and width of our coastal ports is  
21 available less than 35 percent of the time, costing the economy  
22 billions of dollars annually; and

23                 WHEREAS, Each year, the HMT provides an amount sufficient to  
24 meet all of the nation's authorized harbor maintenance needs, but

1 as a result of lagging appropriations, the Harbor Maintenance Trust  
2 Fund had a balance of more than \$9 billion at the start of 2016; in  
3 Texas alone, less than 25 percent of the HMT revenue collected in  
4 the state has been appropriated for harbor maintenance; and

5 WHEREAS, Our nation's ports are vital to our economic  
6 prosperity and global competitiveness, and these funds, which were  
7 collected for the express purpose of the maintenance and  
8 improvement of the ports, should be put to work; now, therefore, be  
9 it

10 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas  
11 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to increase  
12 appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure  
13 that the nation's ship channels are appropriately maintained and  
14 safe; and, be it further

15 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official  
16 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to  
17 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of  
18 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the  
19 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that  
20 this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a  
21 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.