

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.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I hereby certify that S.C.R. No. 37 was adopted by the Senate on May 4, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

I hereby certify that S.C.R. No. 37 was adopted by the House on May 24, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, two present not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

Approved:

Date

Governor