

By: Hinojosa

S.C.R. No. 37

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, Each year, the HMT provides an amount sufficient to
23 meet all of the nation's authorized harbor maintenance needs, but
24 as a result of lagging appropriations, the Harbor Maintenance Trust

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

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

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

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