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By:  Raymond H.C.R. No. 15

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Climate change is a complex issue with important implications for economic stability, national security, and public health for future generations of Texans; and

WHEREAS, In February 2017, the Climate Leadership Council released a compelling report outlining the conservative case for addressing climate change; the international research and advocacy group's members include one of the Lone Star State's most respected native sons, former U.S. secretary of state James Baker, as well as members of the Ronald Reagan administration and both Bush administrations, namely Martin Feldstein and N. Gregory Mankiw, former chairs of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, Henry M. Paulson Jr., former secretary of the treasury, George P. Shultz, former secretary of state, and Thomas Stephenson, former ambassador to Portugal and now a partner at Sequoia Capital; the organization's other members are Rob Walton, longtime chair of Walmart, and Ted Halstead, founder, president, and CEO of the Climate Leadership Council and founder of the New America think tank; and

WHEREAS, The council's report states that evidence of climate change is too powerful to ignore; although the extent of human influence on climate is debated, the risks posed are such that the world needs a kind of "insurance policy," the authors warn; climate solutions based on sound economic analysis would build prosperity, benefit working Americans, reduce regulations, and protect our natural heritage; and

WHEREAS, In the Reagan era, economists conducted a cost-benefit analysis to assess the risks of the growing hole in the ozone layer, and the president then threw his weight behind a landmark treaty, the Montreal Protocol, which implemented a pragmatic, market-based solution to the environmental problem; Mr. Baker, Mr. Shultz, and the other members of the Climate Leadership Council support a similar conservative, limited-government approach to climate change, and economists of diverse viewpoints today concur that the economic benefits of grappling with climate change greatly outweigh the costs; for instance, while no single natural disaster can be attributed to climate change, it has increased the risk of catastrophic events such as Superstorm Sandy and Hurricanes Ike, Rita, Katrina, and Harvey; in 2017, the National Centers for Environmental Information recorded 16 weather and climate disaster events that each exceeded $1 billion in costs, with a cumulative cost of more than $300 billion; and

WHEREAS, Many of the nation's leaders have spoken out about the need to address climate change, including former vice president Al Gore, who said, "Solutions to the climate crisis are within reach, but in order to capture them we must take urgent action today across every level of society"; former president Barack Obama stated that "the shift to a cleaner energy economy won't happen overnight, and it will require tough choices along the way. But the debate is settled. Climate change is a fact. And when our children's children look us in the eye and ask if we did all we could to leave them a safer, more stable world, with new sources of energy, I want us to be able to say yes, we did"; another former president, Bill Clinton, explained that "climate change is more remote than terror but a more profound threat to the future of the children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren I hope all of you have. . . . It's the only thing we face today that has the power to remove the preconditions of civilized society"; and

WHEREAS, Climate change will negatively impact agriculture, coastal cities, and political stability in already-volatile regions of the world, and such developments could imperil our American way of life; leaders in Washington, D.C., should investigate how best to mitigate the dangers to ensure a stable, prosperous future for the generations to come, for as the current U.S. secretary of defense, General James Mattis, declared, "Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to conduct a cost-benefit analysis regarding the risks of climate change and appropriate measures to address those risks; and, be it further

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