H.R. No. 1542

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, The strikingly beautiful Big Bend region is one of the treasures of the Lone Star State, and on June 12, 2019, Big Bend National Park will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its establishment; and

WHEREAS, Situated along the United States-Mexico border in the southwestern part of Texas, Big Bend National Park includes 1,250 square miles of stunning Chihuahuan Desert scenery; the park incorporates a variety of different landscapes within its borders, from the arid beauty of the desert floor to the volcanic peaks of the Chisos Mountains, from the thickets of vegetation along the banks of the Rio Grande to the majestic cliffs of Santa Elena Canyon; and

WHEREAS, For millennia, the park has been home to a diverse array of plants and wildlife and today includes such inhabitants as black bears, mountain lions, and bobcats, as well as 450 species of birds and over 1,000 species of plants; moreover, the region's rich history of human habitation extends back thousands of years and encompasses Native Americans and Hispanic and Anglo-American settlers who arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s; and

WHEREAS, The idea of establishing a park in this unique region was conceived by several individuals, including entrepreneur J. O. Langford and newspaper publisher Amon Carter, and the initiative received a major boost through the efforts of Texas State Representatives Everett Ewing Townsend and Robert McAlpine Wagstaff, who in 1933 cosponsored House Bill 771 to establish Texas Canyons State Park; a second bill renaming the preserve as Big Bend State Park was signed into law by Governor Miriam "Ma" Ferguson on October 27 of that year; over the next decade, park supporters privately raised money to purchase additional land, and in 1942, the State of Texas allocated $1.5 million to purchase 600,000 acres from private owners; and

WHEREAS, On June 6, 1944--the same day that Allied forces made their D-Day invasion of Europe--Amon Carter presented President Franklin Roosevelt with the deed to the land; a week later, on June 12, 1944, Big Bend National Park was officially established, becoming the first national park in Texas; although it drew only 1,409 people during its first year, that number has grown to more than 400,000 annually, and today, visitors benefit from the park's 100 miles of paved scenic drives, 150 miles of hiking trails, and such amenities as the Chisos Mountain Lodge and multiple visitors centers; and

WHEREAS, The abundant ecological, geological, and cultural riches of Big Bend are a source of tremendous pride for all Texans, and Big Bend National Park represents a vital part of our shared legacy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 86th Texas Legislature hereby commemorate the 75th anniversary of Big Bend National Park; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be prepared for the park as an expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.

Nevárez

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 1542 was adopted by the House on May 7, 2019, by a non-record vote.

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Chief Clerk of the House