

By: Cyrier

H.C.R. No. 69

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, For more than 120 years, the enforcement officers of
2 the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and its predecessors have
3 patrolled the rivers, lakes, and coast of the Lone Star State,
4 playing a central role in safeguarding the public waters; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1895, the 24th Texas Legislature created the
6 office of Fish and Oyster Commissioner, and in 1899, the Fish and
7 Oyster Commission was given jurisdiction over all public waters,
8 including freshwater streams, lakes, and ponds; the agency
9 underwent several name changes over the years, becoming the Game,
10 Fish, and Oyster Commissioner in 1907, the Game, Fish, and Oyster
11 Commission in 1929, and the Game and Fish Commission in 1951, and
12 since 1963, it has been known as the Texas Parks and Wildlife
13 Department; and

14 WHEREAS, In 1965, the professionals now known as Texas game
15 wardens were tasked with promoting and enforcing water safety for
16 persons and property in all recreational waters of the state; since
17 1971, game wardens have been formally recognized as Texas peace
18 officers, and in 1997, the 75th Texas Legislature enacted House
19 Bill 966, which required all game wardens to be certified as marine
20 safety enforcement officers; in 2011, during the 82nd Legislative
21 Session, game wardens were designated as the primary officers
22 responsible for enforcing the provisions of the state's Water
23 Safety Act; and

24 WHEREAS, Today, game wardens patrol the public waters of

1 Texas to enforce hunting and fishing regulations and to promote
2 water safety; they have expanded their ranks from six officers in
3 1919 to more than 500, and TPWD's fleet has grown to include more
4 than 590 vessels, including two 65-foot patrol boats in the Gulf of
5 Mexico and 26 SAFE boats for use along the Gulf Coast; in 2013,
6 Texas game wardens were accredited by the National Association of
7 State Boating Law Administrators for their adherence to the U.S.
8 Coast Guard's national standards for training, qualifications, and
9 credentialing; and

10 WHEREAS, In addition, Texas game wardens play a crucial role
11 in homeland security and emergency management, including search,
12 rescue, and recovery efforts; in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina
13 in 2005, they were the first out-of-state peace officers to be
14 deployed to New Orleans, where they were directly involved in the
15 rescue of 4,940 people from houses, apartments, and hospitals, and
16 during Hurricane Harvey, they rescued more than 12,000 Texans from
17 the storm's flood waters; in 2014, they took part in Operation
18 Strong Safety, a homeland security initiative along the
19 Texas-Mexico border; and

20 WHEREAS, The dedicated men and women who safeguard the public
21 waters of the Lone Star State for the use and enjoyment of present
22 and future generations truly deserve to be known, in the words of
23 former Governor George W. Bush, as our modern-day "Texas Navy," and
24 these individuals indeed merit recognition for their vital
25 contributions; now, therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas
27 hereby recognize the game wardens of the Texas Parks and Wildlife

1 Department as the "Texas Navy" and commend them for their
2 outstanding work as maritime safety enforcement officers; and, be
3 it further

4 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
5 prepared for the TPWD as an expression of high regard by the Texas
6 House of Representatives and Senate.