By: Flores S.C.R. No. 2

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

WHEREAS, In 1895, the 24th Texas Legislature created the 6 7 office of Fish and Oyster Commissioner, and in 1899, the Fish and 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 11 Fish, and Oyster Commissioner in 1907, the Game, Fish, and Oyster 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 14 Department; and

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

WHEREAS, Today, game wardens patrol the public waters of 1 2 Texas to enforce hunting and fishing regulations and to promote water safety; they have expanded their ranks from six officers in 3 1919 to more than 500, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's 4 fleet has grown to include more than 590 vessels, including two 5 65-foot patrol boats in the Gulf of Mexico and 26 SAFE boats for use 6 7 along the Gulf Coast; in 2013, Texas game wardens were accredited by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators for 8 9 their adherence to the United States Coast Guard's national standards for training, qualifications, and credentialing; and 10 11 WHEREAS, In addition, Texas game wardens play a crucial role 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 15 deployed to New Orleans, where they were directly involved in the 16 rescue of 4,940 people from houses, apartments, and hospitals, and during Hurricane Harvey, they rescued more than 12,000 Texans from 17 the storm's floodwaters; in 2014, they took part in Operation 18 Strong Safety, a homeland security initiative along 19 20 Texas-Mexico border; and WHEREAS, The dedicated men and women who safeguard the public 21

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

contributions; now, therefore, be it

waters of Texas for the use and enjoyment of present and future

generations truly deserve to be known as our "Lone Star Navy," and

these individuals indeed merit recognition for their vital

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S.C.R. No. 2

- 1 Department as the "Lone Star 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 Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as an
- 6 expression of high regard by the Texas House of Representatives and
- 7 Senate.