

By: Zaffirini

S.C.R. No. 63

1 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, For thousands of years, the mermaid has been one of
3 the most striking symbols of humanity's connection with the natural
4 world, and over the past century, this legendary figure has come to
5 represent the city of San Marcos and its special relationship to the
6 water resources of Central Texas; and

7 WHEREAS, The story of the mermaid in San Marcos begins with
8 the abundant springs that every day release 100 million gallons of
9 freshwater from the Edwards Aquifer into the San Marcos River;
10 considered a sacred place by Native Americans, and regarded as the
11 creation site of the Coahuiltecas, the springs have drawn people
12 to their banks for more than 11,500 years, making this area what is
13 thought to be one of the oldest continually inhabited sites in North
14 America; and

15 WHEREAS, In 1845, Edward Burleson, a former vice president of
16 the Republic of Texas, dammed the headwaters of the San Marcos
17 River, thereby creating Spring Lake; over the ensuing years, the
18 water from the lake powered gristmills, sawmills, an ice factory,
19 and an electric light works; the San Marcos River also constituted
20 an important water stop along the Chisholm Trail; and

21 WHEREAS, A. B. Rogers bought Edward Burleson's homestead in
22 the 1920s and built a resort hotel on the shore of the lake; he later
23 began offering rides in glass-bottomed boats that allowed visitors
24 to see through the crystal water to the bubbling springs beneath;

1 his son Paul, who succeeded him, established the Aquarena Springs
2 amusement park on the property and in 1950 built an underwater
3 theater, where young women known as "aquamaids" staged exhibitions
4 of synchronized swimming and underwater ballet; at the peak of its
5 popularity, the park drew up to 350,000 visitors every year and was
6 featured in *Life* magazine, and the submerged theater was featured
7 on the cover of *Popular Mechanics*; in time, the show came to include
8 Glurpo, a pipe-smoking clown, and a swimming pig named Ralph; and

9 WHEREAS, The performances continued until the 1990s, when
10 Texas State University acquired the park and set a new course for
11 the property; today, the site hosts the Meadows Center for Water and
12 the Environment, which conducts research and educational programs
13 focused on promoting sustainable water management and
14 environmental stewardship; the critical nature of the center's work
15 is underscored by the fact that the Edwards Aquifer supplies
16 drinking water to several million people and serves as the
17 principal source of water for agriculture and industry throughout
18 the region, while waters discharged by the aquifer also support
19 recreation and tourism; in addition, the aquifer system sustains
20 over 40 highly adapted species and a number that are either
21 threatened or endangered, including five found in the San Marcos
22 Springs and a stretch of river just below the springs; and

23 WHEREAS, In 2016, the Mermaid Society of San Marcos was
24 created to foster harmony among the varied interests of
25 environmentalism, the arts, and economic growth; the society has
26 established an annual Mermaid Week, which includes a parade, the
27 Mermaid Society Ball, and the Mermaid SPLASH Festival; and

1 WHEREAS, Through its arts program and with revenue from its
2 hotel occupancy tax, the City of San Marcos has funded a number of
3 mermaid-themed works of public art, including a mural and a series
4 of seven-foot-tall statues decorated by various artists; and

5 WHEREAS, By adopting the mermaid as a symbol of the city, the
6 people of San Marcos are encouraging public interest in the natural
7 environment and highlighting the central role that their community
8 is playing in preserving the water resources of the Lone Star State;
9 now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas
11 hereby designate San Marcos as the Mermaid Capital of Texas; and, be
12 it further

13 RESOLVED, That, in accordance with the provisions of Section
14 [391.003\(e\)](#), Government Code, this designation remain in effect
15 until the 10th anniversary of its designation.