87R23823 KSM-D

By:  Hunter H.C.R. No. 104

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In September 2018, an enormous number of tiny plastic pellets washed up on Mustang and North Padre Islands, alerting Texans to the growing urgency of a worldwide problem; and

WHEREAS, Known colloquially as "nurdles," the tiny pellets are a massive contributor to pollution, along with other preproduction plastics, such as plastic resin flakes, fibers, powders, and powdered coloring for plastics; they can accumulate by the thousands, millions, and billions on beaches and waterways, where wildlife such as seabirds, fish, and crustaceans can mistake them for food; persistent and potentially toxic, the pellets can get trapped in an animal's stomach, causing it to stop eating its usual diet and starve, and industrial chemicals can enter the food chain when they transfer from microplastics to the animals that consume them; the pellets may also have indirect effects on ecosystems, for instance, when their accumulation changes the characteristics of sand, affecting animals such as sea turtles that incubate their eggs on beaches; moreover, they diminish water quality, damage the natural beauty that is vital to recreation and tourism, and negatively impact commercial fishing; and

WHEREAS, According to a 2016 report, the global marine environment is polluted by an estimated 230,000 tons of pellets each year; nurdles can spill at any stage in the industrial process, wherever they are stored, handled, or transported; because they are small and light, they can be easily blown, washed, or brushed from point sources, i.e., a single, confined place, into nonpoint sources, such as storm runoff, and thence into drains, waterways, and the ocean; and

WHEREAS, Pollution from preproduction plastic presents an increasing threat to wildlife, the food chain, and the natural environment, and it is vital that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality address this hazard; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby request the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house

of representatives to create a joint interim committee to study the regulation by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality of preproduction plastic from point and nonpoint sources; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee be composed of five senators appointed by the lieutenant governor and five members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the study address the need to ensure proper, safe, restrictive disposal of preproduction plastic in the state and address the importance of prompt cleanup of any discharged or released plastic; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee's proceedings and operations be governed by such general rules and policies for interim committees as the 87th Texas Legislature may adopt; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee submit a full report, including findings and recommendations, to the 88th Texas Legislature in January 2023.