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By:  Louderback H.C.R. No. 76

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The shrimp industry plays a vital role in the nation's economy and in the prosperity of Gulf Coast communities, where domestic shrimp are harvested and processed; and

WHEREAS, In Texas, the industry supports more than 14,000 jobs, generating approximately $850 million in economic value; however, a glut of foreign shrimp imports threatens this industry with collapse; and

WHEREAS, Imports of frozen warmwater shrimp nearly doubled between 2013 and 2021 to an unprecedented 1.8 billion pounds; data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration indicates that Texas shrimpers harvested 6.8 million pounds of shrimp in the first five months of 2023, compared to 800 million pounds of imported shrimp in the first half of the year; and

WHEREAS, Much of the foreign shrimp is farm-raised and subsidized in order to let producers sharply undercut the price of domestic shrimp; the problem has been well documented since 2005, when the International Trade Commission determined that imports from certain countries were selling at less than fair value, and this continues to occur, despite antidumping regulations; and

WHEREAS, While the influx of imported shrimp has driven prices to record lows, Gulf Coast fishermen must contend with the forces of inflation, including historically high fuel prices; it typically costs a trawler tens of thousands of dollars to go out to sea, so many remained tied up at the docks; a severe labor shortage has exacerbated the crisis; and

WHEREAS, Imported shrimp pose a significant risk to public health; a 2015 investigation by *Consumer Reports* found dangerous bacteria, antibiotics, and drug residues in more than half of the shrimp they tested from Ecuador and India; however, the Food and Drug Administration inspects less than one percent of imported seafood for banned substances; in addition, many seafood products that fail inspections at U.S. ports of entry are simply rerouted by suppliers to other ports where they might not be inspected; and

WHEREAS, The sustainability of the domestic shrimp industry is crucial to the survival of many small, family-owned businesses and to the stability of Gulf Coast communities, but this important economic engine is currently imperiled by unfair foreign competition and other rising challenges; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 89th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby urge the federal government to curb the mass importation of foreign shrimp into the United States to protect the Gulf Coast shrimping industry from unfair competition and to protect consumers from substandard shrimp that does not meet U.S. health standards; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas Secretary of State forward official copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.