WHEREAS, South Texas is on the front line of the battle against the fever tick, a pest that threatens to inflict catastrophic losses on the beef industry should it continue to spread beyond a permanent quarantine zone established along the Rio Grande in 1943; and

WHEREAS, Historically, the fever tick ranged across the entire southeastern United States, reaching as far north as Maryland and Pennsylvania; the tick can carry and transmit a parasite that causes cattle tick fever, which kills up to 90 percent of infected cattle; in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission was founded to fight this scourge, and in 1907 the United States Department of Agriculture established the National Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program; by then, the tick had already caused direct and indirect economic losses estimated to equal more than $1 billion in today's dollars; and

WHEREAS, The eradication program had successfully contained the fever tick to an 852-square-mile quarantine zone by 1943; the tick was never eliminated in Mexico, however, and personnel from the USDA Tick Force have maintained a high level of vigilance to fight continuous reintroduction; after the pest was detected beyond the zone in 2007, five temporary preventive quarantine areas were established, covering more than one million acres in Starr, Zapata, Jim Hogg, Maverick, Dimmit, and Webb Counties; and

WHEREAS, In March 2008, the Texas Department of Agriculture
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requested some $13 million to fight the spread of fever ticks; the
USDA released $5.2 million, and in January 2009 it committed
another $4.9 million in emergency funds, but sustained funding over
the long term is essential; moreover, the National Fever Tick
Eradication Strategic Plan, developed and approved by the USDA in
2006, has never been implemented and funded, and Dr. Bob Hillman,
the state veterinarian and executive director of the Texas Animal
Health Commission, has warned that fever ticks are a national
livestock threat that requires an all-out assault; and

WHEREAS, The fever tick has gained substantial ground in this
state, but the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Texas Animal
Health Commission, and the USDA Tick Force continue working
diligently with cattle owners to save a key component of the Lone
Star State's agricultural economy and prevent the battlefront from
extending to other states; if the fever tick is not contained, the
cost to the cattle industry could easily approach $1 billion a year
and lead to rising food costs for consumers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
hereby memorialize the Congress of the United States to make
eradication of the fever tick in South Texas a priority and continue
to provide appropriate funding and resources for this effort; 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 speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the
senate of the United States Congress, and to all members of the
Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution
be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to
the Congress of the United States of America.

Guillen
Gonzalez Toureilles
Leibowitz
King of Zavala
H.O.R. No. 120

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.C.R. No. 120 was adopted by the House on May 19, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 143, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.C.R. No. 120 was adopted by the Senate on May 27, 2009, by a viva-voce vote.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: 19 Jun '09

Date

Governor

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
2 PM O'CLOCK

JUN 19 2009

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