**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO REQUEST THE MEMBERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA’S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO USE THEIR BEST EFFORTS TO HAVE INCLUDED IN THE 2012 FEDERAL BUDGET ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO CONDUCT MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE PORT OF GEORGETOWN; AND TO ALSO REQUEST OUR STATE’S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO HAVE INCLUDED IN THE 2012 FEDERAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR THE U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING THE DEEPENING OF CHARLESTON HARBOR TO AT LEAST FIFTY FEET SO THAT IT CAN ACCOMMODATE LARGER CONTAINER SHIPS EXPECTED TO CALL AT THE PORT WHEN THE EXPANSION OF THE PANAMA CANAL OPENS IN 2014.

Whereas, the Port of Georgetown is a recognized component of the economic framework of this State; and

Whereas, the Port of Georgetown is an integral part of the economy of the Lowcountry of South Carolina and the entire State, and needs to remain a viable port of opportunity for vessels able to use the port; and

Whereas, federal, state, and local officials believe that dedicating adequate funding from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to return the Port of Georgetown to twenty‑seven feet mean low water level would be beneficial to the economic growth of the State; and

Whereas, the deepening of Charleston Harbor is also absolutely necessary for the State of South Carolina to be able to accommodate the world’s largest container ships that will be moving through the Panama Canal in 2014; and

Whereas, if the Port of Charleston is not deepened to at least fifty feet, South Carolina will miss this new traffic and it will make the Port of Charleston noncompetitive over time; and

Whereas, a feasibility study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the first step in the process to move forward with the three hundred million dollar dredging project that would allow Charleston, already the Southeast’s deepest harbor, to fully accommodate the world’s largest container ships; and

Whereas, President Barack Obama’s $4.6 billion Civil Works budget for 2012, released recently, unfortunately did not include the four hundred thousand dollars necessary for the Charleston Harbor deepening study, although the Port of Charleston contributes far more than this each year to the federal treasury in terms of duties and taxes; and

Whereas, it is critical that federal money be used to pay for the feasibility study. If South Carolina goes forward with the deepening study and project without any federal commitment, the State would be responsible for the entire cost and any future maintenance, thereby putting South Carolina at a competitive disadvantage against other states that are able to secure federal money for port projects; and

Whereas, federal, state, and local officials of all parties and at all levels believe that an expanded and deepened Charleston Harbor is essential to the continued economic growth of the Southeast region of the United States and is a key element in a globally competitive United States economy; and

Whereas, for all of the above reasons, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly request all members of our congressional delegation to use their very best efforts to secure the funding for these projects, so critical to job growth and a robust economy in the states of the Southeastern region, can begin without further delay. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly hereby request the members of South Carolina’s Congressional Delegation to use their best efforts to have included in the 2012 federal budget adequate funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct maintenance dredging of the Port of Georgetown; and

Be it further resolved that the members of the South Carolina General Assembly also request our state’s congressional delegation to have included in the 2012 federal budget funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study regarding the deepening of Charleston Harbor to at least fifty feet so that it can accommodate larger container ships expected to call at the port when the expansion of the Panama Canal opens in 2014.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the each member of the South Carolina Congressional Delegation.

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