

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2470
By: Kuempel
State Cultural and Recreational Resources
Committee Report (Amended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 1995, the Texas Legislature authorized a limited entry program for commercial bay and bait shrimping licenses. This state program was designed to reduce commercial shrimping in Texas bays. Since 1995, no new commercial bay and bait shrimping licenses have become available.

The limited entry program for the commercial bay and bait shrimp fisheries provides a financial incentive for commercial license holders who wish to consider getting out of the business. "Grandfathered" commercial licenses are transferable, but once they are retired through the buyback program they will not be replaced until the fisheries can sustain increased pressure.

House Bill 2470 will allow the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to increase the amount of money available for the license buyback programs if additional money is available. HB 2470 will also allow the Department to use donations, grants or any other money appropriated by the legislature for the program. The Department is also authorized to solicit donations and apply for grants to accomplish the goals of the buyback programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

HB 2470 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code by increasing the amount of money the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department may spend for its license buyback programs to \$2 million. The Department may increase these programs only if additional funding is available. The Department may use donations, grants, or other money appropriated for the programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately if the bill receives two-thirds vote in both houses. If not, effective date is September 1, 2003.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS

HB 2470 is amended by removing the last sentence of Section 1 (b) stating that "the department shall actively solicit donations and apply for any available grants to finance the increase," and replacing it with "the department may actively solicit donations and apply for grants to finance the increase." This language change stipulates that the Department is not required, but has the authorization to solicit donations and apply for grants.

