

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**May 12, 2003**

**TO:** Honorable Glenn Lewis, Chair, House Committee on County Affairs

**FROM:** John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: SB708** by Jackson (Relating to regulation of wild animals by counties and certain other authorities.), **As Engrossed**

**No fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

The bill would authorize a county commissioners court to delegate to a county health department or a public health district the authority to prohibit or regulate the keeping of wild animals in the county. The bill would take effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds in each house; otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2003.

A sampling of health districts and departments were contacted regarding the fiscal impact of the provisions of the bill, and six responded: Public Health Authority for Calhoun, DeWitt, Jackson, and Victoria counties; El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District Animal Regulation and Disease Control; San Antonio Metropolitan Health District; Wichita Falls Environmental Health Coordinator, Wichita Falls-Wichita Falls County Public Health District; Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District; and the Grayson County Health Department.

The responses varied, depending on current practices in the county related to regulating wild animals. Most of those responding indicated that the fiscal impact would be minimal, as the county already prohibits keeping wild animals; therefore, the only costs for the health district or health department would be to enforce the prohibition. The sheriff's office is currently the animal control officer for several of the counties; therefore, there would be a cost for shifting those responsibilities (and an equivalent savings for the Sheriff). If the health district or health department is already handling wild animal responsibilities, there would be no fiscal impact.

For other health departments, such as the Grayson County Health Department, the estimated costs for regulating and enforcing those regulations would be \$60,000 the first year and \$35,000 annually after that. The first year would include the cost of an animal control truck. All other expenses are for an animal control officer and supplies. These amounts were considered by the Grayson County Health Department to be a significant portion of their budget.

**Local Government Impact**

The fiscal impact would vary by county health department or health district depending on current regulations and enforcement methods already in place by the county. Most departments and districts estimate the fiscal impact would be minimal, although there would be exceptions.

**Source Agencies:**

**LBB Staff:** JK, DLBa