

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 391
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Culture, Recreation, & Tourism
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Hunting on private property and game ranches has been a popular business in Texas for many years. Recently, however, a new variation on game hunting has evolved: remote-controlled hunting. This allows customers or the highest bidder to use the internet to "point and shoot". By using high-speed internet connections, a customer can pan the countryside or woods with high resolution digital camera until they spot just the animal they want to blow away. Once they get the animal in their crosshairs, they can use their remote-controlled high-powered "rifle" to zero in on their prize, then click and shoot.

Hunters in Texas are supposed to have a valid hunting license and obey the state's hunting laws. The problem with point and click shooting is that there is no way of verifying whether a person has a valid Texas hunting license and whether he is following other state game laws. A person from anywhere in the world could be shooting Texas animals. CSHB 391 would prohibit computer-based hunting from remote locations.

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

Adds Sec. 62.002 to Subchapter A, Chapter 62 of the Parks and Wildlife Code, to prohibit computer-assisted hunting of an animal or bird in Texas. An offense under this section is a Class A Parks and Wildlife misdemeanor. Each animal that is killed or injured as a result of the violation is a separate offense. Provides exceptions for general-purpose computer and internet equipment.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Effective date is September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The committee substitute strikes page 1, line 23, through page 2, line 4, and substitutes language making it a Class A Parks and Wildlife Code misdemeanor for a person violating the section. Each animal that is killed or injured as a result of the violation is a separate offense.