

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1595
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Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

During the 17th Century, European expansion and intertribal conflicts led to migrations and dispersal as Kickapoo Tribe bands scattered widely throughout Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Texas. The tribe relocated to Eagle Pass, Texas, their primary reservation in the United States. The Kickapoo have primarily lived by hunting, gathering, farming, and migrant farm labor.

The Texas white-tailed deer is integral to the Kickapoo religion. The Kickapoo use the meat and carcass of the deer to conduct daily traditional ceremonies. Current law prevents the Kickapoo from conducting religious and ceremonial rites, as prescribed by Kickapoo religion and tribal custom, because the Kickapoo are not allowed to hunt the deer year-round.

H.B. 1595 allows the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to issue a year-round license to a documented member of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas for hunting antlerless white-tailed deer.

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

H.B. 1595 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to authorize, as an exception to the prohibition against the taking of wildlife resources, a documented member of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas who holds a hunting license to hunt antlerless white-tailed deer for religious ceremonial purposes on any day of the year between one-half hour before sunrise and one-half hour after sunset. The bill requires a documented member of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas hunting antlerless white-tailed deer under these provisions to: comply with all other provisions of the Parks and Wildlife Code and proclamations adopted under that code; notify a local game warden, deputy game warden, or special game warden at least 24 hours before hunting the deer during an otherwise closed season under the game laws of Texas; and obtain explicit permission from a landowner before hunting the deer during an otherwise closed season under the game laws of Texas on the landowner's privately owned property. The bill expands the definition of a "resident," in relation to a hunting license, to include a member of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas who possesses documentation of membership sanctioned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.