

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1739
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Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Native plants are plants that have evolved in a particular region over many thousands of years. They have adapted to the climate, geography, and animal populations of that region and provide habitat to and are a source of food for animals. Native vegetation, unlike cultivated, non-native landscaping, does not require the use of lawn maintenance equipment, a major contributor to air pollution. Native vegetation improves water quality by filtering contaminated runoff and reduces soil erosion by stabilizing soils with its deep root systems.

The disruption of Texas' native habitats and the replacement of native plants with invasive species can have a devastating impact on Texas' ecosystem. Therefore, educational efforts to improve understanding of native plants are vital to Texas. A number of organizations, such as the Native Plant Society of Texas and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, further research on and the conservation and use of native plants and plant habitats of Texas. In addition, these groups celebrate the beauty and diversity of Texas' native plants.

C.S.H.B. 1739 designates the third full week of October as Texas Native Plant Week to celebrate the native plants of Texas. The bill authorizes Texas Native Plant Week to be observed annually in public school and other places.

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

C.S.H.B. 1739 amends the Government Code to designate the third full week in October as Texas Native Plant Week to celebrate the native plants of Texas. The bill authorizes Texas Native Plant Week to be regularly observed in public schools and other places with programs to appreciate, explore, and study Texas native plants.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1739 differs from the original by designating the third full week in October as Texas Native Plant Week, rather than designating October 15 as Texas Native Plant Day. The substitute differs from the original by authorizing Texas Native Plant Week to be regularly observed, whereas the original requires Texas Native Plant Day to be regularly observed.