

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1749
By: Bonnen
Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Beginning in 1999, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) was authorized to manufacture and sell specialty license plates with a design and name of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA). Today, this "redfish plate" is on more than 1,000 passenger vehicles. The original authorization for this plate was included in S.B. 1355, 73rd Legislature, Regular Session, 1993, relating to specialty license plates for certain nonprofit organizations. The bill required the fees for these plates to be deposited to the credit of the state highway fund.

H.B. 2971, 78th Legislature, Regular Session, 2003, consolidated the provisions related to specialty license plates in Chapter 504, Transportation Code, and repealed many of the existing sections, including the section that authorized the CCA plates. The repeal of those sections did not affect the validity of license plates already authorized under previous law. H.B. 2971 authorized revenue from specified specialty plates to be designated to certain special funds for the benefit of the organizations sponsoring the plates. The marine conservation specialty license plates, however, were not specifically included in this authorization and do not appear in Chapter 504, Transportation Code, with the other specialty license plates currently being issued by TxDOT. The revenue from the sale of these plates continues to be deposited into the highway fund.

C.S.H.B. 1749 creates a new section in Chapter 504, Transportation Code, to require fees from the sale of marine conservation license plates to be deposited to the credit of an account in the treasury for use by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) once TxDOT's administrative costs have been deducted. Money in this account is to be used by TPWD to support the activities of Coastal Conservation Association Texas in the conservation of marine resources.

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. 1749 amends the Transportation Code to require, after deduction of the Texas Department of Transportation's administrative costs in accordance with the law relating to creation of new specialty license plates, the remainder of the fees allocated to the specialty license plate fund from the sale of marine conservation specialty license plates to be deposited to the credit of an account in the state treasury to be used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to support the activities of Coastal Conservation Association Texas in the conservation of marine resources. The bill requires TPWD to establish reporting and other mechanisms necessary to ensure that the money is spent for purposes for which it is dedicated.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 1749 removes provisions in the original providing for the issuance of marine conservation specialty license plates.