

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 716
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Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to certain sources, feral hogs in Texas are responsible for approximately \$400 million in direct damage to Texas every year. There are an estimated two million feral hogs in Texas and feral hogs are found in nearly every county of the state. It is also estimated that for every dollar spent on feral hog control, more than \$7.50 in agricultural products is saved. In addition, it is estimated that predation by coyotes causes millions of dollars in economic losses to agricultural producers in the state.

Helicopters are used in certain areas to hunt feral hogs in order to reduce hog populations. According to the Department of Agriculture, more than 75 percent of the state has suitable terrain and vegetative cover for hunting feral hogs from helicopters, and such hunting is a cost-effective method for controlling the animals in areas in which hogs have become conditioned to traditional trapping efforts or in any area in which over 30 hogs an hour are removed.

C.S.H.B. 716 attempts to address the problems caused by feral hogs and coyotes by prohibiting a proclamation or regulation of the Parks and Wildlife Commission from prohibiting the taking of feral hogs or coyotes using a helicopter.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 716 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to prohibit a proclamation or regulation of the Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted under provisions governing permits to manage wildlife and exotic animals from aircraft from prohibiting a landowner or landowner's agent from contracting or agreeing to participate as a hunter or observer in using a helicopter to take depredating feral hogs or coyotes.

C.S.H.B. 716 requires the commission, as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill, to amend rules as necessary to comply with the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 716 differs from the original by prohibiting a proclamation or regulation of the Parks and Wildlife Commission adopted under provisions governing permits to manage wildlife and exotic animals from aircraft from prohibiting a landowner or landowner's agent from contracting or agreeing to participate as a hunter or observer in using a helicopter to take depredating feral

hogs or coyotes, whereas the original prohibits such a proclamation or regulation from prohibiting a person or the person's agent or lessee who holds a landowner's authorization and such a permit from using a helicopter to take depredating feral hogs.