

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3037
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Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties have expressed serious concerns regarding the recent selling of state-owned longhorn cattle from Big Bend Ranch State Park. The parties note that when this West Texas park was originally purchased a number of years ago, the purchase included the longhorn herd that roamed the property. The parties contend that the longhorns are considered an integral part of Big Bend heritage and have remained in the park as living exhibits of how the west once was. The parties further contend that the herd is important both to maintaining the genetic integrity of one of the purest longhorn bloodlines and to preserve an important vestige of the state's heritage as the state becomes increasingly urbanized.

The interested parties note that, in recent months, the state began selling off drastic numbers of the longhorn herd from Big Bend Ranch State Park, culling the herd by roughly half. The parties further note that while it is normal for the park to sell off its yearly calf crop to help provide additional funds for the maintenance and upkeep of the herd, the recent sale drastically reduced the herd. The parties contend that there needs to be limitations on the selling of this longhorn herd to ensure that the herd remains a vital example of Texas heritage. C.S.H.B. 3037 seeks to address this issue.

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. 3037 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to prohibit the Parks and Wildlife Department from reducing the size of a herd of longhorn cattle by selling longhorn cattle owned by the state and located in Big Bend Ranch State Park unless the cattle remain in the park after the sale. The bill's provisions do not prohibit the sale of longhorn calves and heifers if the number of breeding stock is not reduced or prohibit the sale of cattle to replace breeding stock as necessary to maintain the size of the herd or to prevent inbreeding.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 3037 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and highlighted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 13, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by adding Section 13.0062 to read as follows:

Sec. 13.0062. RESTRICTION ON SELLING LONGHORN CATTLE IN NATURAL AREAS. (a) The department may not reduce the size of a herd of longhorn cattle by selling longhorn cattle owned by the state and located in a state natural area unless the cattle remain in the state natural area after the sale.

(b) This section does not prohibit:

(1) the sale of longhorn calves and heifers if the number of breeding stock is not reduced;
or

(2) the sale of cattle to replace breeding stock as necessary to maintain the size of the herd or to prevent inbreeding.

(c) "Natural area" has the meaning assigned by Section 24.001.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Chapter 22, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by adding Subchapter U to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER U. BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK

Sec. 22.271. RESTRICTION ON SELLING LONGHORN CATTLE IN BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK. (a) The department may not reduce the size of a herd of longhorn cattle by selling longhorn cattle owned by the state and located in Big Bend Ranch State Park unless the cattle remain in the park after the sale.

(b) This section does not prohibit:

(1) the sale of longhorn calves and heifers if the number of breeding stock is not reduced;
or

(2) the sale of cattle to replace breeding stock as necessary to maintain the size of the herd or to prevent inbreeding.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.