

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3756
By: Farrar
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

When a permeable surface is converted to an impermeable surface through paving or other impervious groundcover, rainwater that would normally soak into the ground runs off the surface much faster and in higher quantities than it would in a natural state. When roads are being built storm sewers are not always available or do not have the capacity to hold the runoff. For this reason, detention ponds are often used to help temporarily detain water to keep water runoff at a manageable rate. Detention ponds normally flood after a big rainstorm and remain dry or swamp-like during low rain seasons.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) may purchase land near highways and within municipalities to build detention ponds. As these municipalities become denser and undeveloped land becomes more scarce, land set aside for detention ponds can perform a dual purpose by providing flood relief during high rain seasons and becoming recreational space or wetland habitats during other parts of the year. By leaving the ground topography in a usable state, a municipality's park department or other nonprofit agencies can make the land into a space that beautifies the city with native vegetation, provides a habitat for animals, and offers green public space in an urban setting.

H.B. 3756 seeks to increase the amount of green space in Texas that would be available for wildlife and the general public.

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. 3756 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in the construction of detention ponds associated with TxDOT's highway projects, to consider using a permeable surface for the detention pond and completing the detention pond so that its finished state would enable it to be used as green space, available for use by wildlife or the general public.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.