

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1526
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 normally would soak into the ground runs off the surface much faster and in higher quantities than it would in a natural state. When constructing roads, storm sewers are not always available or able to hold the runoff. For this reason, detention ponds often are used to help temporarily detain water, keeping the runoff at a manageable rate. Unlike some retention ponds that hold water indefinitely, these detention ponds normally flood after a big rainstorm but are dry or swamp-like during low rain seasons. As cities become denser and green space becomes harder to come by, land set aside for detention ponds can perform a dual purpose by providing flood relief during rainy seasons and recreational space or wetland habitats the remainder of the year. By leaving the ground topography in a usable state, a city's parks 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. Interested parties contend that multiple uses for storm water detention facilities create a better return on the investment of infrastructure dollars to the State of Texas.

H.B. 1526 seeks to encourage the Texas Department of Transportation to consider leaving the surface of a detention pond as natural groundcover rather than lining it with concrete.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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. 1526 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Department of Transportation, in the construction of detention ponds associated with its highway projects, to consider using a permeable surface for the detention pond or completing the detention pond so that the pond's completed state enables it to be used as green space available for wildlife and the general public.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.