

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 608  
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County Affairs  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In Texas, there are only a handful of holidays for which an individual may sell or purchase fireworks, such as July 4th and New Year's Eve. These limited windows within which to purchase fireworks inhibits certain religious groups from celebrating important religious rituals that don't fall within these windows, such as the Hindu festival of Diwali. H.B. 608 seeks to address this issue by providing for the sale of fireworks before and during the Diwali holiday.

### **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. 608 amends the Occupations Code to authorize a county commissioners court by order to allow a retail fireworks permit holder to sell fireworks to the public during the period beginning five days before the first day of Diwali and ending at midnight on the last day of Diwali.

H.B. 608 amends the Local Government Code to require the Texas A&M Forest Service to make its services available each day during the Diwali holiday fireworks season to respond to a county request to determine whether drought conditions exist on average in the county. The bill sets a deadline of 15 days before the beginning of Diwali by which the county commissioners court must adopt an order prohibiting or restricting the sale or use of restricted fireworks in the unincorporated area of the county based on a drought determination for that fireworks season.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.