

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2568
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Agriculture & Livestock
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Carrizo cane, a nonnative invasive plant species, has long been a problem along the Rio Grande. Its large, dense strands occupy much of the river's banks and floodplains, thwarting law enforcement's efforts along the border, concealing criminal activity and illegal immigration into the country, and consuming massive amounts of water from the river, which is the primary source of drinking and irrigation water for Texas border communities. In order to help meet the governor's border security priorities, in the 84th Regular Session the legislature directed the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to develop and implement the carrizo cane eradication program to address this problem. In order to assist TSSWCB in administering the program, C.S.H.B. 2568 requires TSSWCB to conduct a study of the extent of the growth of carrizo cane along the river and the cost of the cane's eradication.

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

C.S.H.B. 2568 requires the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to conduct a study of the extent of the growth of carrizo cane along the Rio Grande to assist TSSWCB in administering the carrizo cane eradication program. The bill requires TSSWCB, in conducting the study, to determine the following:

- the acreage of carrizo cane remaining along the Rio Grande;
- the amount of water that is consumed by the growth of carrizo cane along the Rio Grande; and
- the program's cost of eradicating the carrizo cane identified in the study.

The bill requires TSSWCB, not later than January 1, 2025, to report the study's results and any recommendations to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives that have jurisdiction over natural resources. The bill's provisions expire February 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2568 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a provision not included in the introduced requiring TSSWCB, in conducting the study, to determine the amount of water that is consumed by the growth of carrizo cane along the Rio Grande.