

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.J.R. 74
By: Parker
Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, Texas Parks and Wildlife leases (or partially leases) land from private corporations to create some state parks. As a result, there have been incidents where land leased by the state for a park was sold to a private entity, shutting down the park in the process.

If the state had a dedicated fund to use for purchasing new land, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department would have the ability to make sustainable investments in new parks.

S.J.R. 74 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, which will provide a dedicated funding source for the acquisition and development of state parks in Texas. S.J.R. 74 will afford voters the opportunity to ensure that Texans and visitors can continue to enjoy the beauty of Texas' parks for generations to come.

S.J.R. 74 proposes a constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the centennial parks conservation fund.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article III, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 49-e-1, as follows:

Sec. 49-e-1. (a) Provides that the centennial parks conservation fund (fund) is established as a trust fund outside the treasury. Provides that the fund, in accordance with general law, is authorized to be used only for the creation and improvement of state parks.

(b) Provides that the fund consists of:

(1) money appropriated, credited, or transferred to the fund by the legislature;

(2) gifts, grants, and donations received by the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) or TPWD's successor in function for a purpose for which money in the fund is authorized to be used under this section; and

(3) investment earnings and interest earned on amounts credited to the fund.

(c) Authorizes the legislature to appropriate money from the fund to TPWD or TPWD's successor in function for the purposes prescribed for the fund by this section and general law.

(d) Provides that, for purposes of Section 22 (Restriction on Rate of Growth of Appropriations), Article VIII (Taxation and Revenue), of this constitution:

(1) money in the fund is dedicated by this constitution; and

(2) an appropriation of state tax revenues for the purpose of depositing money to the credit of the fund is treated as if it were an appropriation of revenues dedicated by this constitution.

(e) Requires that the reasonable expenses of managing the fund and its assets be paid from the fund.

SECTION 2. Requires that the proposed constitutional amendment be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 7, 2023. Sets forth the required language of the ballot.