

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 4230
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Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department conducted a trail study in 2022 and concluded in its report that a key impediment to the development of regional and statewide trails is a lack of coordination between all agencies involved. In response to the study's conclusions and interest from constituents and stakeholders in expanding outdoor recreation and preserving Texas history, C.S.H.B. 4230 seeks to create a statutory framework for the planning, development, and management of a unified hike and bike trail network named the Bicentennial Trail that would connect key historical and environmental landmarks in Texas.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the General Land Office in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 4230 amends the Natural Resources Code to require the General Land Office (GLO) to coordinate the establishment of a network of hike and bike trails designed for the exclusive use of pedestrians and bicyclists, to be known as the Bicentennial Trail, to connect the Alamo to the State Capitol and to include hike and bike trail connections to Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs for the purposes of promoting outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and the historical and cultural heritage of Texas. The bill requires the GLO to undertake to ensure that the Bicentennial Trail is established on or before January 1, 2036.

C.S.H.B. 4230 requires the GLO, as necessary or convenient to coordinate the establishment and maintenance of the Bicentennial Trail, to enter into memoranda of understanding with political subdivisions, nonprofit organizations, the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the Texas Department of Transportation, and other appropriate persons or entities. The bill authorizes such a memorandum of understanding to address coordination of trail development, trail maintenance, acquisition of interests in real property, conservation efforts along the trail routes, or any other matter pertinent to the establishment or maintenance of the trail.

C.S.H.B. 4230 authorizes the GLO to adopt rules as necessary to coordinate the establishment of the Bicentennial Trail, including a timeline for the acquisition of real property and real property interests as necessary to complete the trail route. The bill prohibits real property or interests in real property necessary to complete the trail routes from being acquired through eminent domain. The bill's provisions relating to the establishment of the trail expire

September 1, 2037. However, the bill establishes that the expiration of those provisions does not affect the validity of a memorandum of understanding entered into under those provisions.

C.S.H.B. 4230 authorizes real property acquired by the state for the Bicentennial Trail to be used only for the purposes of the trail and requires TPWD to maintain any real property it acquires for the trail.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 4230 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 introduced included a requirement for the GLO to enter into memoranda of understanding with TPWD to acquire real property or interests in real property as necessary to complete the trail routes and concerning other matters related to the establishment of the trail or the maintenance of the trail and property associated with the trail. The substitute does not include that requirement and instead includes TPWD in the list of entities with which the GLO is required to enter into memoranda of understanding for the general purpose of establishing and maintaining the trail.

The substitute limits the applicability of the introduced version's requirement for TPWD to maintain any real property acquired by the state for the trail to only real property that TPWD acquires.