

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1285
By: Eckhardt
Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill sponsor has informed the committee that bats are vital to the state's economy and environment, playing essential roles in pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control; that bats can protect crops from damage and reduce the reliance on chemical pesticides through their consumption of insects; and that Texas hosts a number of bat species. The bill sponsor has also informed the committee that in April 2024, concerns arose over the removal of a bat colony in San Antonio wherein property management, using spray foam, sealed bats inside a building, potentially leaving them trapped to die, but that a bat refuge learned about the events and intervened, removing the foam to allow the bats to exit safely. S.B. 1285 seeks to address this issue by prohibiting a person from entombing a live bat in order to stop the rare, but documented, practice of entombing bats with no opportunity for the bats to leave.

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

S.B. 1285 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to restrict the prohibition against a person hunting a bat to apply only to a live bat and to prohibit a person from entombing a live bat. The bill does the following with respect to the persons exempt from provisions relating to the protection of bats:

- removes as an exempt person a person who is licensed to provide pest control services and instead includes as an exempt person a licensed pest control professional who captures a bat that the professional considers injured or diseased; and
- includes as an exempt person a person who transports a bat for the purpose of rehabilitation at a permitted rehabilitation facility if the bat has had no known prior exposure with humans.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.