

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2801
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Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current law, a Texas hunting license is required per individual during certain competitive field trial events where individuals and their dogs track, locate, and tree squirrels, nongame, and fur-bearing animals. Other states have created event permits that waive the hunting license requirement when weapons are not carried, and animals are not taken or harvested.

Under current law, Texas allows this type of permit to be acquired for sanctioned field trial events for banded pen-reared birds.

S.B. 2801 expands the use of this permit to sanctioned field trial events for squirrels, nongame, and fur-bearing animals. This bill allows one \$50 permit to be acquired per event to waive the requirement for every individual on the premises to hold a hunting license (\$7 - \$315 per person, depending on age and residency), saving participants time and money while providing notice to the agency and neighboring landowners that an event will take place at a time certain.

This permit is not a requirement for these types of events to be held. If Texans prefer to operate under the current process, they may continue to individually purchase a Texas hunting license and not pursue a field trial event permit.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 2801 amends current law relating to a permit issued by the Parks and Wildlife Department for certain hunting dog field trials and authorizes a fee.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 43.253, Parks and Wildlife Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 43, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Subchapter J, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. FIELD TRIAL PERMIT

Sec. 43.251. DEFINITIONS. Defines "field trial," "field trial permit," "fur-bearing animal," "nongame," and "squirrel."

Sec. 43.252. FIELD TRIAL PERMIT. (a) Authorizes a person to apply to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in the manner prescribed by Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (TPWC) rules for a permit under this section exempting registered participants in a field trial held by the person from the hunting license requirements of Chapter 42 (General Hunting License) while the individuals are participating in the field trial.

(b) Provides that TPWD is authorized to issue a permit under this section only for a field trial held on privately owned land or on public land authorized under TPWC rules adopted under Section 43.253(a).

(c) Requires that an application for a field trial permit meet certain criteria.

(d) Provides that the fee for a field trial permit is \$50.

(e) Provides that a field trial permit is valid for a period of nine consecutive days and only on the land specified in the permit.

Sec. 43.253. COMMISSION RULES. (a) Requires TPWC to adopt rules specifying the public lands for which a field trial permit is authorized to be issued.

(b) Authorizes TPWC to adopt rules as necessary to administer this subchapter, including rules necessary to manage and protect wildlife subject to a field trial permit.

Sec. 43.254. HUNTING LICENSE NOT REQUIRED DURING FIELD TRIAL. Provides that an individual registered to participate in a field trial held under a field trial permit is exempt from the hunting license requirements of Chapter 42 while the individual is participating in the field trial.

SECTION 2. Reenacts Section 11.032(b), Parks and Wildlife Code, as amended by Chapters 235 (H.B. 2755) and 334 (H.B. 4018), Acts of the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023, and amends it, as follows:

(b) Requires TPWD to deposit to the credit of the game, fish, and water safety account all revenue, less allowable costs, from certain sources, including field trial permit fees collected under Subchapter J, Chapter 43 (Special Licenses and Permits). Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Requires TPWC, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt rules necessary to implement Subchapter J, Chapter 43, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Provides that, to the extent of any conflict, this Act prevails over another Act of the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.