1-1   By: Ashby, et al.   H.B. No. 2018
1-2   (Senate Sponsor - Hinojosa of Nueces)
1-3   (In the Senate - Received from the House April 30, 2025;
1-4   May 1, 2025, read first time and referred to Committee on Water,
1-5   Agriculture and Rural Affairs; May 5, 2025, reported favorably by
1-6   the following vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0; May 5, 2025, sent to printer.)

1-7   COMMITTEE VOTE

1-8		Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-9	Perry	X			
1-10	Hancock	X			
1-11	Birdwell			X	
1-12	Blanco	X			
1-13	Gutierrez	X			
1-14	Hinojosa of Nueces	X			
1-15	Johnson	X			
1-16	Kolkhorst	X			
1-17	Sparks	X			

1-18   A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-19   AN ACT

1-20 relating to the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program.
1-21   BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-22   SECTION 1. Section 84.002(1), Parks and Wildlife Code, is
1-23 amended to read as follows:
1-24   (1) "Agricultural conservation easement" means a
1-25 conservation easement in qualified land that is designed to
1-26 maintain the land's agricultural or timber use and accomplish one
1-27 or more of the following additional purposes:
1-28   (A) conserving water quality or quantity;
1-29   (B) conserving native wildlife species through
1-30 protection of their habitat;
1-31   (C) conserving rare or sensitive plant species;
1-32 or
1-33   (D) conserving large tracts of qualified
1-34 open-space land that are threatened with fragmentation or
1-35 development.
1-36   SECTION 2. Section 84.009(a), Parks and Wildlife Code, is
1-37 amended to read as follows:
1-38   (a) The council may:
1-39   (1) adopt rules necessary to perform program duties
1-40 under this chapter;
1-41   (2) request, accept, and use gifts, loans, donations,
1-42 aid, appropriations, guaranties, subsidies, grants, or
1-43 contributions of any item of value for the furtherance of any
1-44 purposes of this chapter;
1-45   (3) establish, charge, and collect fees, charges, and
1-46 penalties in connection with the programs, services, and activities
1-47 provided for by this chapter;
1-48   (4) make, enter into, and enforce contracts and
1-49 agreements, and take other actions as may accomplish any of the
1-50 purposes of this chapter;
1-51   (5) seek ways to coordinate and leverage public and
1-52 private sources of funding;
1-53   (6) adopt best practices and enforcement standards for
1-54 the evaluation of easements purchased through grants from the fund;
1-55   (7) establish a protocol for the purchase of
1-56 agricultural conservation easements and for the distribution of
1-57 funds to approved applicants;
1-58   (8) administer grants awarded to successful
1-59 applicants;
1-60   (9) ensure that agricultural conservation easements
1-61 purchased under this chapter are not inconsistent with:
1-62   (A) the preservation of open space;

                                 1

2-1   (B)   the maintenance of the land's agricultural or
2-2 timber use; and
2-3   (C)   the   conservation   of   wildlife   habitat   or
2-4 water; and
2-5   (10)   approve the termination of easements and take any
2-6 other action necessary to further the goals of the program.
2-7   SECTION 3.   Section 84.010, Parks and Wildlife Code, is
2-8 amended to read as follows:
2-9   Sec. 84.010.   CRITERIA FOR AWARDING GRANTS.   The council
2-10 shall:
2-11   (1)   give priority to applications that protect and
2-12 maintain the agricultural or timber productivity of lands that are
2-13 susceptible   to   development,   including   subdivision   and
2-14 fragmentation; and
2-15   (2)   adopt a scoring process to be used in evaluating
2-16 applications that considers the following:
2-17   (A)   maintenance   of   landscape   and   watershed
2-18 integrity to conserve water and natural resources;
2-19   (B)   protection of habitats for native plant and
2-20 animal species,   including habitats for endangered,   threatened,
2-21 rare, or sensitive species;
2-22   (C)   potential   for   leveraging   state   money
2-23 allocated to the program with additional public or private money;
2-24   (D)   proximity of the subject property to other
2-25 protected lands;
2-26   (E)   the term of the proposed easement, whether
2-27 perpetual or for a term of 30 years;
2-28   (F)   the   land's   agricultural   or   timber
2-29 productivity; and
2-30   (G) [(F)]   a resource management plan agreed to by
2-31 both parties and approved by the council.
2-32   SECTION 4.   This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

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