

By: Flores, Cole

H.B. No. 5259

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a wildlife corridor action plan developed by the Parks and Wildlife Department and certain other duties of the department relating to wildlife corridors.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 12, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by adding Subchapter I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Sec. 12.801. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Plan" means the wildlife corridor action plan developed under this subchapter.

(2) "Wildlife corridor" means a designated area that connects wildlife populations and habitats that would otherwise be separated by human activities or structures.

Sec. 12.802. WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ACTION PLAN. (a) The department, in consultation with the Texas Department of Transportation, shall develop a wildlife corridor action plan that recommends and prioritizes wildlife crossing projects intended to promote driver safety and wildlife connectivity.

(b) In developing the plan, the department shall use the best available science and department surveys to identify, list, and describe:

(1) wildlife corridors;

(2) existing and planned barriers to wildlife movement

1 along wildlife corridors;

2 (3) areas with a high risk of vehicle collisions with
3 wildlife;

4 (4) habitats that are:

5 (A) of high quality for priority species and
6 ecosystem health;

7 (B) occupied by rare or at-risk species; or

8 (C) designated as critical habitat under the
9 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Section 1531 et seq.);

10 (5) migration routes of native, game, and migratory
11 species; and

12 (6) land containing a high prevalence of existing
13 human barriers to wildlife corridors, including roads, dams, power
14 lines, and pipelines.

15 (c) The plan must recommend wildlife crossing projects that
16 prioritize promotion of driver safety and wildlife connectivity.
17 For each recommended project, the plan must include a description
18 of the project and the proposed wildlife crossing infrastructure or
19 other mitigation techniques recommended to meet plan goals.

20 (d) The department shall include in the plan maps detailing
21 high-priority areas for wildlife corridor infrastructure and any
22 other information necessary to meet the goals of the plan.

23 (e) Not later than December 1, 2026, the department shall
24 submit the plan to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker
25 of the house of representatives. This subsection expires September
26 1, 2027.

27 Sec. 12.803. COORDINATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES. The

1 department shall assist other state agencies and political
2 subdivisions of this state, and on request any federal agency, to
3 consider and incorporate wildlife corridors, including plan
4 recommendations, when developing any governmental strategic plan,
5 map, or action.

6 Sec. 12.804. PLAN PUBLICATION AND UPDATES. The department
7 shall:

8 (1) maintain publication of the plan on the
9 department's Internet website; and

10 (2) periodically update the department's Internet
11 website with information regarding the implementation of wildlife
12 corridor projects recommended under the plan.

13 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
14 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
15 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
16 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
17 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.