

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3953
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Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The open burn pit registry is a critical tool for helping service members, veterans, and medical providers determine the long-term effects of exposure to toxins from open air burn pits. In providing outreach and information, the registry is meant to help stop medical misdiagnoses that often lead to denial of benefits and financial hardships for veterans exposed to airborne toxins while serving our country. C.S.H.B. 3953 seeks to ensure the registry's benefits are fully realized by providing for the creation and maintenance of the open burn pit registry fund.

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

C.S.H.B. 3953 amends the Health and Safety Code to create the open burn pit registry fund as a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. The bill sets out the composition of the fund and limits the appropriation of money in the fund to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The bill provides for the authorized uses of the money by DSHS, including the creation and maintenance of an open burn pit registry.

C.S.H.B. 3953 amends the Government Code to authorize a person to make a voluntary contribution in any amount to the open burn pit registry fund when the person applies for an original or renewal handgun license. The bill requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to do the following:

- include space on the first page of each application for an original or renewal handgun license that allows a person applying for the license to indicate the amount that the person is voluntarily contributing to the fund;
- provide an opportunity for the person to contribute to the fund during the application process for the license on the DPS website; and
- send any contribution to the comptroller of public accounts for deposit in the state treasury to the credit of the open burn pit registry fund not later than the 14th day of each month.

The bill authorizes DPS to deduct money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for administering the bill's provisions relating to the voluntary contribution to the open burn pit registry fund before sending money to the fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 3953 differs from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways by conforming to certain bill drafting conventions.