

SUBJECT: Elimination of certain mandated parks and wildlife reports

COMMITTEE: State Recreational Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Kuempel, Siebert, Black, Hightower, Horn, Oakley, Rabuck, B. Turner, Woolley
0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — Jim Sagnes, Texas Shrimp Association
On — Hal Osburn, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Jim Riggs, Texas Parks & Wildlife

BACKGROUND: Section 66.217 of the Parks and Wildlife Code governs the research and study of various species of finfish. Under current law, the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is required to issue a report to the governor and Legislature before every legislative session. The department is also required to prepare various other reports.

DIGEST: HB 1956 would eliminate the requirement that TPWD prepare a written report on finfish research or to submit such a report to the governor and the legislature. HB 1956 would require, however, that the findings of the research be kept as part of TPWD's permanent records.

HB 1956 would repeal the requirements that reports be submitted on the fish and oyster industry, the Texas Recreation and Parks Account, the status of the Texas Trail System and the Shrimp Research Program.

This bill would take immediate effect if approved by two-thirds of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1956 would eliminate costly reports and unnecessary reports. In 1994 House standing committees were charged to review the legislative reporting requirements of all agencies under their jurisdiction to identify areas where reporting obligations could be streamlined.

The House Agriculture and Wildlife Management Committee found that the volume of reporting requirements by TPWD was overwhelming. The committee found that extra staff was being hired to meet these reporting requirements and the additional data generated was not being fully utilized. The information collected by TPWD is accessible from its computer system which could eliminate the need for prepared written report.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition