

- SUBJECT:** Expanding wildlife management use for open-space land designation
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — T. King, Anderson, M. González, Kacal, Kleinschmidt, Springer, White  
0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For —Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, Exotic Wildlife Association; Macy Ledbetter; David Mohr; Alan Warren; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lisa Barton, Texas Deer Association; David Oefinger, Texas Pest Management Association; Joey Park, Texas Wildlife Association; Betty Wachsmann)  
  
Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth)  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joe Morris)
- BACKGROUND:** Under current law, a landowner receiving an open-space land designation for purposes of property tax appraisal for a traditional agricultural use, such as cattle grazing, can continue receiving the open-space designation if the use of the land is changed to certain qualified non-traditional agricultural uses. In this instance, wildlife management qualifies as open-space land if the land is used for three of seven approved wildlife management practices. A landowner may not receive a wildlife management designation unless the land is already qualified for agricultural use.  
  
Qualified open-space land is appraised at a price per acre that is below market price.
- DIGEST:** HB 1998 would add “supporting outdoor education” to the list of wildlife management practices that would qualify land for an open-space designation.  
  
The bill would take effect January 1, 2014.

HB 1998  
House Research Organization  
page 2

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

Agriculture is a major industry in Texas, and one of our state's greatest heritages is our land. Increased outdoor education is necessary to acquaint our increasingly technically oriented students with agricultural practices and our state's wildlife.

HB 1998 would encourage the continued use and development of agriculturally related industries in Texas through outdoor education.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

The bill would not define "supporting outdoor education." This could be interpreted very broadly and result in an inappropriate use of designated land.