

- SUBJECT:** Allowing proceeds from the sale of fishing stamps for certain purposes
- COMMITTEE:** Culture, Recreation and Tourism — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 4 ayes — Frullo, Fallon, Gervin-Hawkins, Martinez
- 0 nays
- 3 absent — Faircloth, D. Bonnen, Krause
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 4 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** Parks and Wildlife Code, sec. 43.805 governs funds collected from the sale of freshwater fishing stamps and collectible freshwater fishing stamps by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Funds from the sale of \$5 freshwater fishing stamps are authorized to be spent on the repair, maintenance, renovation, or replacement of freshwater fish hatcheries and the purchase of game fish to stock public waters. Funds from the sale of \$5 collectible freshwater fishing stamps are authorized to be spent only on the restoration, enhancement, or management of fresh water fish habitats.
- DIGEST:** SB 573 would allow the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to use funds collected from both the sale of freshwater fishing stamps and collectible freshwater fishing stamps to be spent only on:
- repairing, maintaining, renovating, or constructing freshwater fish hatcheries and facilities supporting the management and research of freshwater fisheries;
 - purchasing game fish for stocking public waters;
 - restoring, enhancing, or managing freshwater fish habitats;
 - developing shoreline-based projects for freshwater angler access; and
 - administering and operating freshwater fish hatcheries in an

amount that did not to exceed 20 percent of the average annual net receipts per fiscal biennium.

The bill would repeal the provision in current law governing the use of funds from collectible freshwater fishing stamp sales.

The bill would take effect September, 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

SB 573 would allow the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to use funds generated from the sale of both freshwater fishing stamps and collectible freshwater fishing stamps to help fund critical capital improvements and repairs at Texas fish hatcheries.

Current law allows only the funds from the sale of collectible freshwater fishing stamps to be used for funding fish habitats, which has proven insufficient. By allowing funds generated from the sale of freshwater fishing stamps to be used for these purposes, the bill would improve TPWD's ability to restore, enhance, and manage fish habitats. Funding for fish habitats would be used to purchase or construct structures to enhance fish-attracting cover and stabilize reservoir shorelines and riverbanks.

The bill would attract more anglers to fish in state waters by enhancing fisheries, creating better fishing conditions, improving shoreline and riverbank access, and constructing more fishing piers and non-motorized boat launches.

The bill would provide TPWD with budget flexibility by allowing the use of up to 20 percent of freshwater fishing stamp and collectible freshwater fishing stamp net receipts for administrative and operational costs for freshwater fish hatcheries.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.