

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
82R8893 NAJ-F

S.B. 958  
By: Wentworth  
Agriculture & Rural Affairs  
3/18/2011  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

In 2001, the legislature enacted the Texas Dangerous Wild Animals Act (Act) to protect citizens from the danger presented by the spread of dangerous wild animal ownership in Texas. The Act does not ban ownership of dangerous wild animals by Texans; rather, it requires owners to register such animals with a local animal registration agency, pay a fee, and ensure the proper care, treatment, and enclosure of the animals. The Act, however, does not require a municipality or county to establish a process for registering these animals. In political subdivisions that do not elect to establish such a process, no individual or entity is allowed to house or care for a dangerous wild animal unless the individual or entity falls within one of the exemptions within the Act.

The legislature exempted certain categories of animal welfare entities from the Act because these entities include governmental entities, research facilities, nationally accredited zoos and aquariums, film productions, circuses, and even universities that utilize a dangerous wild animal as an official mascot. An animal sanctuary is a facility where animals are brought to live and be protected for the rest of their lives. Animal sanctuaries typically operate in Texas under the classification of animal shelters; however, some have argued that an animal sanctuary is not, in fact, an animal shelter because the term animal shelter suggests a temporary animal holding and rehabilitation facility.

S.B. 958 clarifies that accredited animal sanctuaries are permitted to house and care for dangerous wild animals in Texas, even in counties that have not established a process for registering the animals with a local animal registration agency.

As proposed, S.B. 958 amends current law relating to the regulation of dangerous wild animals.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 822.102(a), Health and Safety Code, to provide that this subchapter does not apply to certain entities, including an organization that is an accredited member of the American Sanctuary Association or the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2011.