

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R189 SGA-D

S.B. 1978
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Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Feeding Texas administers the Hunters for the Hungry (HFTH) program, which benefits 21 food banks, their network of 3,000 charitable agencies, as well as nonprofit food assistance providers outside of the network. Feeding Texas actively recruits meat processors, solicits venison donations, promotes the program, and provides resources to support participating meat processors throughout Texas. Hunters bring their tagged, legally-harvested deer to a participating meat processor, and pay a nominal fee (around \$40) to cover basic processing costs. After processing and packaging the venison, meat processors contact local food assistance providers to pick up the ground venison. Through the HFTH program, venison becomes a source of very economical protein, costing around \$1 per pound to process and distribute. Protein is the number one most requested food bank staple item and this is a source to help fill that request. The program also helps landowners manage their deer populations, promoting environmental stewardship while offering a meaningful way for hunters to help their communities.

Texas is one of the few states that does not support venison donation programs through a budget appropriation or voluntary license donation opportunity. Diverting a portion of the hunting license fee would create a sustainable revenue source to support our hunger relief programs.

S.B. 1978 allows those applying for a hunting license to voluntarily contribute money to a nonprofit that provides hunters with a way to donate legally harvested deer to local food assistance providers and requires the nonprofit to submit an annual report.

As proposed, S.B. 1978 amends current law relating to a voluntary contribution to help feed hungry Texans when a person applies for a hunting license.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 42.011, Parks and Wildlife Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 42, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Section 42.011, as follows:

Sec. 42.011. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION TO HELP FEED HUNGRY TEXANS.

(a) Authorizes a person, when the person applies for a hunting license of any type under this chapter, to contribute \$1 or more to a nonprofit organization, designated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (commission), whose purposes include the administration of a statewide program that provides hunters with a way to donate legally harvested deer to local food assistance providers. Requires that the program include the recruitment of meat processors who, for a nominal fee to cover processing costs, process and package the venison and contact the food assistance providers to pick up the venison.

(b) Requires the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to:

(1) include space on each application for a hunting license that allows a person applying for the license to indicate the amount that the person is voluntarily contributing to the nonprofit organization; and

(2) provide an opportunity for a person to contribute to the nonprofit organization during the application process for a hunting license on TPWD's Internet website.

(c) Requires TPWD to hold in trust the remainder of the amount a person contributes under this section to the nonprofit organization after deducting TPWD's administrative costs. Requires TPWD to send the money held in trust to the nonprofit organization not later than November 1 of each year.

(d) Authorizes money received by the nonprofit organization under this section to be used only to administer, operate, support, and promote the program described by Subsection (a).

(e) Requires the nonprofit organization to submit an annual report to the legislature and TPWD that includes the total dollar amount of contributions received by the organization under this section.

(f) Authorizes the commission to adopt rules to implement this section, including rules related to processes for the selection, inspection, and periodic review of the nonprofit organization.

SECTION 2. Requires the commission to designate a nonprofit organization to receive the donations under Section 42.011, Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 15, 2015.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.