

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 722
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Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Managed Lands Deer Program (MLDP) and Fee: MLDP allows landowners enrolled in a formal wildlife management program with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to have the state's most flexible deer seasons and bag limits. MLDP has experienced significant growth since its inception. By charging a fee for participation in the MLDP, which is currently free of charge, TPWD will be able to add much needed capacity to effectively address the significant increase in demand associated with program popularity and growth.

The MLDP has been in effect since 1996 for white-tailed deer and 2005 for mule deer. MLDP has been a very successful vehicle for encouraging hunting and deer harvest, deer management, and habitat conservation on private lands in Texas. Phenomenal growth in the program over the last 20 years has seen program enrollment increase from 813 properties spanning about 3.1 million acres in 1998 to about 10,250 properties covering nearly 25 million acres in 2016. The number of properties enrolling in the MLDP has averaged a 16.2 percent annual increase over the 20-year period and stabilized to about 4.5 percent annual growth during the most recent five-year period. This translates to about 300 to 400 properties being added each year.

As proposed, S.B. 722 amends current law relating to a fee for participation in the Managed Lands Deer Program of the Parks and Wildlife Department.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 12.028, Parks and Wildlife Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 12, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Section 12.028, as follows:

Sec. 12.028. MANAGED LANDS DEER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION FEE. (a) Defines "fee" and "program."

(b) Authorizes the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, by rule, to establish and provide for the collection of a fee for each program participation option.

(c) Requires that proceeds from a fee established under Subsection (b) be deposited in the game, fish, and water safety account.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 11.032(b), Parks and Wildlife Code, as follows:

(b) Includes the Managed Lands Deer Program participation fee collected under Section 12.028 in a list of sources from which the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is required to deposit revenue to the credit of the game, fish, and water safety account. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.