

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 80TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 20, 2007

TO: Honorable Steve Ogden, Chair, Senate Committee on Finance

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB12 by Hilderbran (Relating to the funding, powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission.), **Committee Report 2nd House, Substituted**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would establish a legislative task force on the use of the sporting goods sales tax for which two members would come from the House Cultural, Recreation, and Tourism and two members from House Appropriations Committee, to be appointed by Speaker of the House of Representatives; and, two members from the Senate Natural Resources Committee and two from the Senate Finance Committee, to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. The legislative task force would review issues related to the sporting goods sales tax, and the revenue needs of the state park system related to policy decisions of the 80th Legislature. The task force would be required to submit a report, with findings and recommendations, to the 81st Legislature no later than January 15, 2009. The bill would require that no additional sporting goods sales tax funds be dedicated to a specific purpose or account until the task force review is submitted to each member of the legislature.

The bill would require that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) assist a joint interim study by the legislative audit committee, and legislative committees with jurisdiction over the two agencies, of the need for and terms and conditions of any transfer of certain state historic sites. The report that would result from the review by the interim study must be submitted to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the members of the Legislature, as well as the governing boards and executive directors of the TPWD and the THC, no later than January 1, 2009.

It is anticipated that these studies can be completed within existing resources.

The bill would add certain state park management-related provisions -- such as requirements to create an equipment review system, a maintenance provider review system, and a facility management plan and priorities list. It would also add certain reporting requirements, from the TPWD to the Governor and committees of the Legislature, associated with these provisions.

The equipment review system would involve an annual assessments to determine whether maintenance equipment has become outdated. Outdated equipment identified would be sold and the proceeds would be deposited to the appropriate agency account.

The maintenance provider review would entail annual assessments to determine whether maintenance tasks performed by the agency could be done by a third-party contractor in a more cost-effective manner.

The priorities list would provide information on the additional funding needs identified and prioritized by the TPWD for state park facilities most in need of repair, renovation, expansion, or other maintenance.

Finally, the bill would require the TPWD to comply with the recommendations contained in the State

Auditor's "An Audit Report on Financial Processes at the Parks and Wildlife Department", Report No. 07-02, contingent on the agency receiving sufficient funding to implement the recommendations.

The aforementioned park management requirements are anticipated to improve the efficiency of the state park system. The fiscal impact resulting from this improved efficiency cannot be quantified at this time.

Other provisions such as the TPWD giving preference to capital projects in state parks in which state funding is matched equally with local funding; increasing park visitation; improving revenue from state park concessions operated by agency staff or private vendors; use of inmate labor; and enhancements to the agency's park reservation system, have the potential to increase the efficiency of the state park system. The fiscal impact resulting from this improved efficiency cannot be quantified at this time.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 802 Parks and Wildlife Department, 347 Public Finance Authority, 808 Historical Commission

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