

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
82R16014 SLB-D

H.B. 716
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Natural Resources
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

According to several sources, feral hogs in Texas are responsible for approximately \$400 million in direct damages to Texas every year. There are an estimated two million feral hogs in Texas and feral hogs are found in nearly every county of the state. It is also estimated that for every dollar spent on feral hog control, more than \$7.50 in agricultural products is saved. In addition, it is estimated that predation by coyotes causes millions of dollars in economic losses to agricultural producers in the state.

Helicopters are used in certain areas to hunt feral hogs in order to reduce hog populations. According to the Department of Agriculture, more than 75 percent of the state has suitable terrain and vegetative cover for hunting feral hogs from helicopters, and such hunting is a cost-effective method for controlling the animals in areas in which hogs have become conditioned to traditional trapping efforts or in any area in which over 30 hogs an hour are removed.

H.B. 716 attempts to address the problems caused by feral hogs and coyotes by prohibiting a proclamation or regulation of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission from prohibiting the taking of feral hogs or coyotes using a helicopter.

H.B. 716 amends current law relating to the taking of certain feral hogs and coyotes using a helicopter.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission in SECTION 2 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 43.109, Parks and Wildlife Code, by adding Subsection (c), to prohibit a proclamation or regulation of the Parks and Wildlife Commission (commission) adopted under this subchapter from prohibiting a landowner or landowner's agent from contracting or agreeing to participate as a hunter or observer in using a helicopter to take depredating feral hogs or coyotes.

SECTION 2. Requires the commission, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to amend rules as necessary to comply with Section 43.109(c), Parks and Wildlife Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2011.