

- SUBJECT:** Allowing digital images of hunting, fishing licenses as proof of licensure
- COMMITTEE:** Culture, Recreation and Tourism — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Cyrier, Martinez, Bucy, Gervin-Hawkins, Holland, Kacal, Morrison, Toth
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Jarvis Johnson
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Quint Balkcom, Game Warden Peace Officer's Association)
- Against — None
- On — Stormy King, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Justin Halvorsen, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
- BACKGROUND:** Parks and Wildlife Code sec. 42.002 requires a resident to have a license to hunt animals in the state, with certain exceptions, and sec. 46.001 requires a person to have a license to fish in public waters in the state. Sec. 50.001 allows the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to issue a combination hunting and fishing license.
- Sec. 42.006 allows the Parks and Wildlife Commission by rule to prescribe compliance requirements for the above licenses.
- DIGEST:** HB 547 would require the Parks and Wildlife Commission, in adopting rules for license compliance requirements, to allow a person to present an image displayed on a wireless communication device as proof of licensure for a hunting, fishing, or a combination hunting and fishing license. The displayed image could be either an image from the Parks and Wildlife Department website or a photograph of the license.

The display of an image that included one of these licenses would not constitute effective consent for a law enforcement officer or any other person to access the contents of the wireless communication device except to view the license information.

A telecommunications provider could not be held liable to the license holder for the failure of a wireless communication device to display license information.

A court would not be prevented from requiring a person to provide a paper copy of the person's hunting, fishing, or combination license during court proceedings.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 547 would modernize requirements for hunting and fishing licenses by allowing a person to show a photo or digital receipt of a hunting, fishing, or combination hunting and fishing license on the person's phone as proof of licensure. Game wardens routinely allow hunters and fishers to show these images on their phones. This bill would codify what already is practiced in the field. Game wardens can verify identities and confirm through an existing database the appropriate hunting or fishing license.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No concerns identified.