

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing a fee for participation in the Managed Lands Deer Program
- COMMITTEE:** Culture, Recreation and Tourism — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Cyrier, Martinez, Bucy, Gervin-Hawkins, Holland, Jarvis Johnson, Kacal, Toth
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Morrison
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 9 — 31-0
- WITNESSES:** *On House companion bill, HB 3396:*  
For — Evelyn Merz, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; David Yeates, Texas Wildlife Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* John Shepperd, Texas Foundation for Conservation and Texas Coalition for Conservation; David Sinclair, Game Warden Peace Officers Association)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bill Kelberlau)
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Eric Marin, Texas Education Agency; Clayton Wolf, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
- BACKGROUND:** 31 TAC sec. 65.29 establishes the voluntary Managed Lands Deer Program to expand certain hunting options of deer for purposes of wildlife management. Landowners may enroll a tract of land into the program, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department determines the number and type of deer that may be hunted there based on the unique characteristics of the tract of land and the deer population and issues corresponding tags for each deer to a designated participant. The tags are valid only on the land or aggregated land for which they are issued, and the tags do not apply to personal or annual bag limits.
- Parks and Wildlife Code sec. 11.033 establishes the game, fish, and water safety account. Authorized uses of the account include the propagation

and protection of wildlife and expansion of hunting opportunities.

Concerns have been raised over the financial viability of the Managed Lands Deer Program, and some have suggested authorizing a fee to cover the cost of the program.

**DIGEST:** SB 733 would authorize the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to impose a fee for participation in the Managed Lands Deer Program. The fee would be deposited in the game, fish, and water safety account.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.

**NOTES:** According to the Legislative Budget Board, SB 733 would result in a gain of about \$1.3 million annually the game, fish, and water safety account beginning in fiscal 2020.