

SUBJECT: Issuance of TPWD hunting and fishing licenses and stamps

COMMITTEE: State Recreational Resources — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Kuempel, Siebert, Black, Hightower, Oakley, B. Turner, Woolley
0 nays
2 absent — Horn, Rabuck

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Andy Sansom, Paul Israel, Jayna Burgdorf, Texas Parks and Wildlife

DIGEST: HB 2216 would authorize the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to implement a computerized "point-of-sale" license and stamp issuance program and to designate an entity to install the system and collect revenue for the department. The bill would provide alternatives to users' signatures on stamps issued by an automated system.

The commission would be authorized to do the following:

- establish licenses and license packages for hunting, fishing and other activities, set fees for such licenses and license packages and set issuance or collection fees for license deputies issuing them;
- change the license year by rule to a period other than September through August;
- set the specific amounts for license deputy issuance and collection fees at rates at least equal to current rates;
- standardize the license period for hunting licenses to coincide with combination and annual fishing licenses;

- set fee amounts and issue more than the two existing types of temporary recreational fishing licenses;
- exempt properly licensed hunters from muzzleloader hunting stamp requirements; and
- grant authority to issue "Commemorative Editions" (editions not valid for hunting or fishing) of stamps and to set the fees for them.

The legislation would consolidate the three types of private bird hunting area licenses into one type.

The bill would make it a Class C Parks and Wildlife misdemeanor to violate a commission rule relating to possession of a required license or stamp.

The bill would take effect immediately if approved by two-thirds of the membership of each house, but would apply only to fees collected for a licensing period that begins September 1, 1995, except that fees pertaining to a fishing license required to fish in Lake Texoma would take effect January 1, 1996.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2216 would give the Parks and Wildlife Commission needed flexibility to streamline issuance of licenses and stamps for the benefit of its customers. Allowing the commission to change the hunting and fishing license year would make the sale of licenses and stamps would be distributed in a more equitable and efficient system. Currently, a hunting and fishing license is valid from September 1 through August 31. Some sports fishers purchase licenses during the spring and summer months, but their license is still void August 31. This legislation would allow for the sale of fishing and hunting licenses that would be valid for one year from the time of sale.

The point-of-sale system would enhance customer service by providing "one-stop shopping" to allow faster license and stamp issuance, decrease inventory problems and administrative time for sales reports and ensure that money for licenses and stamps is deposited within shorter time periods.

This legislation would also allow the department to sell licenses by telephone and allow purchasers to hunt and or fish immediately instead of having a wait for licenses, stamps or tags. The commission could establish licenses and license packages for hunting or fishing that would allow sports fishers and hunters to obtain a valid license to hunt or fish a variety of game with one license. This would be a cost effective way to obtain a valid license and would bring in additional revenue to the department.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The Legislature should be wary of delegating too much authority to the Parks and Wildlife Commission, particularly in the area of setting fees.

NOTES:

The committee substitute made numerous changes in the original bill, including prohibiting lesser fees than those in effect June 1, 1995, deleting a section on hunting cooperative licensing, adding a section on oyster boat licenses and changing the effective date.