

**SUBJECT:** Authorizing appropriations for preservation of state historical parks

**COMMITTEE:** Appropriations — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 25 ayes — Junell, Delisi, Averitt, Coleman, Cuellar, Davis, Finnell, Gallego, Glaze, Greenberg, Haggerty, Heflin, Hernandez, Hochberg, Kubiak, Moreno, Mowery, Pitts, Price, Raymond, Swinford, Tillery, S. Turner, Walker, West

0 nays

2 absent— Eiland, Hinojosa

**WITNESSES:** For — John L. Nau, III, Silver Eagle Distributing

Against — None

On — Curtis Tunnel, Texas Historical Commission

**DIGEST:** HB 2474 would allow the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to receive legislative appropriations for the preservation, enhancement and promotion of state historical parks, sites and structures and to spend these funds for historical parks, structures and sites under the jurisdiction of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), pursuant to an agreement between the two agencies.

HB 2474 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2474 would create mechanisms to allow the THC to preserve historical structures and parks in facilities that are under the jurisdiction of the TPWD. While HB 2474 does not provide an appropriation for the THC, the bill would clarify that the Legislature can appropriate money for the commission to preserve historical sites that are under the jurisdiction of the TPWD. There is currently some overlap in responsibilities between the THC and the TPWD; HB 2474 would clarify that the Legislature wants the two agencies to work together on the preservation, enhancement and promotion of historical sites.

The financing mechanism created by HB 2474 would allow THC to follow through on some of the recommendations in a management study conducted to fulfill a 1995 legislative mandate to study the state management of historic sites. In that study, the management consulting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick recommended that THC have a continuing role in the management of historical sites, and suggested specific sites, such as the Sam Rayburn House, should be maintained through some form of THC funding.

Many Texas state parks are historic sites or contain historical structures, but in many cases the TPWD. has not made a priority of preserving these sites. Historic sites are a very high priority for tourists visiting Texas, and they are worthy of focused management and promotion. The THC has the expertise and commitment to historic preservation to ensure that these historic sites are appropriately maintained. HB 2474 would ensure that THC maintained a role in the preservation of historic parks and structures.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

Any appropriations to THC should not include funding for management of historical parks and structures. The KPMG Peat Marwick management study recommended that these responsibilities remain with TPWD.

**NOTES:**

A related bill, HB 2356 by Davis, which would transfer management of historical parks from TPWD to THC, was reported favorably, as substituted, by the State, Federal and International Relations Committee on May 1. HB 2242 by Davis, which would require THC to submit to TPWD annual recommendations regarding the management of historical sites, is pending in the State, Federal and International Relations Committee.

The companion bill, SB 1079 by Lucio, is pending in the Senate State Affairs committee.