

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.J.R. 74
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Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas boasts some of the most beautiful and diverse natural landscapes in the country. Despite the state's abundant natural resources, many of its parks and wildlife areas are facing challenges that threaten their continued existence. One of the primary challenges is the lack of funding for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of state parks. In recent years, Texas has struggled to keep up with the demand for new parks and to maintain existing ones.

S.J.R. 74 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the centennial parks conservation fund, which will provide a dedicated funding source for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of state parks in Texas. S.J.R. 74 will afford voters the opportunity to ensure that Texans and visitors can continue to enjoy the beauty of Texas' parks for generations to come.

S.J.R. 74 proposes a constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the centennial parks conservation fund to be administered by the Parks and Wildlife Department.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Article III, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 49-e-1, as follows:

Sec. 49-e-1. (a) Provides that the centennial parks conservation fund (fund) is created as a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. Requires that money in the fund be administered, without further appropriation, by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) or the TPWD's successor in function. Authorizes the fund, in accordance with general law, to be used only for the creation and improvement of state and local parks and the conservation of land, water, and soil in this state. Authorizes separate accounts to be established in the fund as necessary or convenient to administer the fund or the supported projects.

(b) Authorizes the legislature by general law to authorize TPWD or TPWD's successor in function to use the fund to provide financial assistance to support projects for public purposes consistent with this section through grants administered by TPWD or TPWD's successor in function. Authorizes the financial assistance authorized by this subsection to be provided directly to public or private entities as provided by general law.

(c) Authorizes TPWD or the TPWD's successor in function, at that entity's discretion, in accordance with general law, to transfer money from the fund to other programs and funds of TPWD or TPWD's successor in function.

(d) Provides that the fund consists of:

(1) money appropriated to the fund;

(2) money transferred or deposited to the credit of the fund by general law;

(3) investment earnings and interest earned on amounts credited to the fund; and

(4) gifts, grants, and donations received for the fund.

SECTION 2. Requires that the proposed constitutional amendment be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 7, 2023. Sets forth the required language of the ballot.