

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3724
By: Villalobos
Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that oyster cultivation has become an important industry, offering a sustainable seafood source while reducing pressure on wild oyster populations, but that introducing cultivated oysters into natural oyster beds, private oyster beds, or coastal waters without oversight poses potential risks, including the spread of diseases, genetic disruption, and other negative impacts on marine ecosystems. Without proper management, these risks could threaten the health of wild oyster populations and the overall balance of the state's coastal waters. H.B. 3724 seeks to mitigate these risks by requiring written authorization from the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) before cultivated oysters can be placed in natural or private oyster beds or coastal waters and by requiring TPWD to develop best management practices to ensure safe and responsible placement.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3724 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to authorize a person to place a cultivated oyster in a natural oyster bed, a private oyster bed, or coastal waters if the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) authorizes the placement in writing. The bill requires TPWD to adopt best management practices for authorizing the placement of cultivated oysters in such locations.

H.B. 3724 revises the existing prohibition against a person placing a cultivated oyster in a natural oyster bed or a private oyster bed by including coastal waters among the prohibited locations and specifying that placements authorized under the bill's provisions are excepted from the prohibition.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.