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## **Senator Lucio Announces Bills to Encourage Hunting and Fishing Tourism**

**AUSTIN** - Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) announces the filing of three bills intended to encourage out-of-state tourism across the state by lowering onerous costs associated with hunting and fishing licenses for nonresidents.

"Texas has some of the world's most beautiful locations for hunting and fishing. We need to encourage sportsmen and families to make Texas their annual vacation destination—and to bring their tourist dollars with them. Instead, we've saddled nonresidents with fees and confusing restrictions they're often not willing to endure," Senator Lucio said.

Under current law, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission is authorized to charge non-Texas residents higher fees for hunting and fishing licenses than residents. By statute, the fee for a general nonresident hunting license cannot be less than \$100.75. The fee for a nonresident fishing license cannot be less than \$15. By contrast, the fee for either a resident hunting or fishing license can be as little as \$8.

Consistent with current law, the Commission currently charges \$68 for a nonresident fishing license, but \$40 for a resident fishing license, a 70% increase. The difference in fees is more dramatic for hunting licenses. The Commission charges \$25 for a resident hunting license, but charges \$315 for a general nonresident hunting license, a 1,160% increase.

[Senate Bill 373](#) would lower the cost of nonresident licenses to a more tourist-friendly sum. Under the bill, non-resident hunting licenses would be no more than double the cost of a resident general hunting license. Non-resident fishing licenses would no longer be more than \$10 above the cost of resident fishing licenses.

Additionally, [Senate Bill 374](#) would create a nonresident 14 day hunting license which can be purchased no more than four times during a calendar year. The fee set by the Commission for this license would not be more than the amount charged for a resident hunting license.

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One more of Senator Lucio's bills ensures hunters and fisherman are not over-paying for a license, only to see it expire soon after purchase. Under current law, annual hunting and fishing licenses are effective for one year between September 1 and August 31 of the following year. Licenses are issued without regard to the date on which they are purchased, meaning, for example, a hunter who purchases a license in July would get much less value from that license than if it had been purchased closer in time to September 1.

[Senate Bill 375](#) would remove the annual expiration date of August 31 and makes all licenses expire one year from their date of purchase, allowing purchasers to get the full value of the license.

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