

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 457 Lowry Park Zoo
SPONSOR(S): Culp
TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1870

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) <u>Natural Resources</u>	_____	<u>Camechis</u>	<u>Lotspeich</u>
2) _____	_____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____	_____
4) _____	_____	_____	_____
5) _____	_____	_____	_____

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

This bill designates the Lowry Park Zoo as the state center for Florida species conservation and biodiversity. The Zoo performs activities such as captive breeding, animal husbandry, conservation education, veterinary care and rescue, rehabilitation, research, and release of Florida's endangered and threatened species consisting of the Florida manatee, panther, red wolf, Key deer, Key Largo wood rat, and whooping crane. According to Lowry Park Zoo, the designation will not impact any other facility and will facilitate the Zoo's continued participation and growth by attracting funding from diverse, nationwide funding sources.¹

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state governments, local governments, or private entities.

¹ Lex Salisbury, CEO, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 10, 2004; Elizabeth Hennig, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 3, 2004.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. DOES THE BILL:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Reduce government? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Lower taxes? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Expand individual freedom? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Increase personal responsibility? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Empower families? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

For any principle that received a "no" above, please explain:

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

CURRENT SITUATION

Lowry Park Zoo (LPZ) is located in Tampa, Florida, and is ranked as one of the top-three mid-sized zoos in the United States.² Mr. Lex Salisbury, Chief Executive Officer of LPZ, describes the zoo as follows:

- LPZ is the best attended not-for-profit attraction in Florida with 766,422 attendees last year and 80% local visitation.
- Approximately half of the zoo's animal inventory of 1600 animals is comprised of Florida native species.
- LPZ is the only zoo in the world where you can see all of the following Florida endangered species in one place:
 - Florida Panther
 - Red Wolf
 - Florida Manatee
 - Whooping Crane
 - Key Largo Wood Rat
 - Key Deer (coming in spring)
- Since 1991, LPZ has been the only licensed not-for-profit manatee rehabilitation facility in the world and the only manatee rehabilitation facility on Florida's west coast. Since that time, 124 manatees have come through the facility. Of the manatees that survive the first 48 hours, 85%+ are successfully released into the wild. Since 1991, the FWC has historically reimbursed between 25-85% of LPZ's annual costs associated with these activities.
- LPZ is the least publicly supported accredited zoo in the southeast, but spends approximately \$1million per year in its manatee program alone. This is 10% of the zoo's operational budget and one of the highest percentage levels of support to *in situ* conservation of any zoo in the world.
- Since 1991, the LPZ has accepted, treated, and/or accommodated 5 Florida Panthers, 17 red wolves (at the zoo and the zoo's Green Swamp Species Survival Center in Pasco County), 124 manatees, and 7 whooping cranes. LPZ is the only facility designated to hold and breed the Key Largo wood rat for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

² www.lowryparkzoo.com, accessed Jan. 26, 2004.

According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Commission), LPZ is one of many agencies and facilities in the State who partner with the Commission and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in conservation research, health care, and rehabilitation of endangered and threatened species.³ With respect to manatee rehabilitation, Commission staff members rescue injured or ill manatees statewide and transport the manatees to the nearest rehabilitation facility, including LPZ, Sea World in Orlando, or Miami Seaquarium. Commission field biologists assess each manatee and determine whether the manatee requires rehabilitation.⁴ According to the Commission, LPZ, unlike the other rehabilitation facilities, rarely assists during rescues.⁵

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

This bill designates the Lowry Park Zoo (LPZ) as “the state center for Florida species conservation and biodiversity.” LPZ performs activities such as captive breeding, animal husbandry, conservation education, veterinary care and rescue, rehabilitation, research, and release of Florida’s endangered and threatened species, including the Florida manatee, panther, red wolf, Key deer, Key Largo wood rat, and whooping crane.⁶

According to Mr. Lex Salisbury, Chief Executive Officer of the LPZ, the proposed designation “will not impact any other facility, state or federal agency, but will be a simple acknowledgement of work we have done and resources we have spent over the past dozen years on Florida Endangered Species and will facilitate our continued participation and growth in this arena.”⁷ Mr. Salisbury also indicated that the designation will assist the LPZ in obtaining “additional federal funds and foundation grant funds into Florida through our not-for-profit.”⁸ According to LPZ, additional funding will enable the facility to:

- Continue to provide excellent care for Florida’s endangered species;
- Further develop LPZ’s conservation and research programs;
- Ensure that the most appropriate and beneficial veterinary technology is in place to care for sick and injured wildlife;
- Attract resources to the State of Florida from a more diverse nationwide group of funders, who will support specific conservation projects;
- Ensure higher visibility for LPZ’s conservation education programming to attract a broader participation; and
- Develop stronger partnerships and other professional collaborations with local, national, and international conservation groups.⁹

The Commission offered the following comments regarding the designation of LPZ as “the state center” for conservation and biodiversity of endangered and threatened Florida species¹⁰:

- The designation could lead to inefficiency if [threatened and endangered species] have to be taken to LPZ when rehabilitation is required;
- The designation could impact the Commission’s role as the state’s lead [agency] in managing endangered and threatened species;
- Other agencies and organizations currently involved in these activities might withdraw if they are not also designated as a state center, potentially leading to the loss of expertise in the care of [threatened and endangered] species;

3 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Legislative Bill Analysis, Received Feb. 3, 2004.

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6 Lex Salisbury, CEO, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 10, 2004.

7 Lex Salisbury, CEO, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 10, 2004.

8 Lex Salisbury, CEO, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 10, 2004.

9 Elizabeth Hennig, Lowry Park Zoo, Feb. 3, 2004.

10 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Legislative Bill Analysis, Received Feb. 3, 2004.

- The state could lose its prerogative to seek services from the best qualified provider on a case-by-case basis.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Designates Lowry Park Zoo as the state center for Florida species conservation and biodiversity.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues: None.

2. Expenditures: None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues: None.

2. Expenditures: None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR: None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS: None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to: require the counties or cities to spend funds or take an action requiring the expenditure of funds; reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate; or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties.

2. Other: None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY: This bill does not impact the rulemaking authority of any state agency.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS: None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

It is anticipated that Representative Culp, the bill's sponsor, will offer an amendment in the Natural Resources Committee to change the designation of LPZ from "the state center" to "one of the state centers" for Florida species conservation and biodiversity.