

**For immediate release:**

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## **Legislature acts to protect Fairfield Lake State Park, create new state parks**

**AUSTIN** - Today, the House of Representatives gave preliminary approval to a bill designed to prevent Fairfield Lake State Park from being converted into a private development. Meanwhile, the Senate approved legislation and a constitutional amendment to create the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund to fund the acquisition of land for new state parks.

[HB 4757](#) (Orr) would require Parks and Wildlife Department approval for any permit application to use water from Fairfield Lake State Park. Such a requirement could scuttle plans by real estate developer Todd Interests to convert the park into a private golf course and gated community and potentially pipe water from the lake to the Dallas Fort Worth area.

[SB 1648](#) and [SJR 74](#) (both by Sen. Tan Parker) would establish the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, authorizing the purchase of land for new state parks. The Senate version of the state budget, SB 1, includes \$500 million in general revenue for the fund, contingent on passage of the bills. The House Culture, Recreation and Tourism committee this morning held a hearing on several House bills to fund state parks, including , which would also establish a Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, but with an investment of \$1 billion from the rainy day fund.

Environment Texas Executive Director Luke Metzger released the following statement:

“What a great day for state parks in Texas. HB 4757 will hopefully bring Todd Interests to the negotiating table so the state can fairly purchase the land on which Fairfield Lake State Park sits and keep it open to the public forever. And the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund will create a new golden age for state parkland acquisition in Texas.

We need our state parks. Whether it’s the thrill of climbing higher than ever before or the wind through the trees as we walk through the woods, people get something out of the great outdoors that we don’t get from our smartphones or from walking down city streets.

On the centennial of the state parks system, it’s time to make a bold investment in nature to make sure Texans present and future can experience the natural beauty of our state and ensure our wildlife friends have abundant places to live and thrive.”