

Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

CS/HB 549 — Public Records/Site-specific Location Information of Endangered and Threatened Species

by Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee and Rep. Overdorf (CS/CS/SB 812 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; Environment and Natural Resources Committee; and Senator Hutson)

The bill creates a new public records exemption to exempt site-specific location information for endangered and threatened species from public inspection and copying requirements. The exemption does not apply to location information for animals held in captivity.

The bill contains legislative findings, including that “the release of such location information would jeopardize the continued existence of endangered or threatened species by increasing the risk of exposure to wildlife poachers or by threatening the integrity of the site due to increased use or traffic. This exemption protects private property owners from potential trespass and related liability issues when endangered or threatened species are found on their properties and encourages such property owners, as well as researchers, to provide agencies with information they might not otherwise provide if such location information were made public.”

The exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and shall stand repealed on October 2, 2025, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2020.

Vote: Senate 38-1; House 117-0