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## DIGEST

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HB 649 Engrossed

2025 Regular Session

Ventrella

**Abstract:** Provides for park and recreation districts in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Present law creates the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (commission). Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides that the commission's authority extends to the whole parish, inclusive of the territorial limits of the city of Baton Rouge.

Proposed law excludes the areas within the boundaries of the Central Recreation District created pursuant to proposed law.

Present law provides that the commission is the legal successor of the Baton Rouge Parish and Municipal Recreation Commission for the parish of East Baton Rouge, and succeeds to all of the rights and obligations of such recreation commission, and to the ownership of all of the property, movable or immovable, tangible or intangible, owned by such former recreation commission, and to all of the rights, privileges, and concessions of every kind and nature invested in and exercised by such recreation commission, by the city of Baton Rouge, or the parish of East Baton Rouge.

Proposed law retains present law but excepts the assets and authority in the geographic areas of the Central Recreation District created pursuant to proposed law.

Present law authorizes the commission to impose and collect from year to year taxes upon all of the taxable property carried on the assessment rolls of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Proposed law excepts the property within the boundaries of the Central Recreation District created pursuant to proposed law from the commission's taxing authority.

Proposed law creates the Central Recreation District as a body politic and corporate and political subdivision with boundaries coterminous with the boundaries of the city. Provides that the purpose of the district is to plan, develop, and operate the public park and recreational properties and facilities in the district and to administer programs and activities that promote recreation and the general health and well-being of citizens.

Proposed law provides that the district is governed by a board of commissioners composed as follows:

- (1) The mayor of the city of Central.
- (2) The members of the governing authority of the city of Central.
- (3) One member appointed by the member of the La. House of Representatives whose district encompasses all or the greater portion of the area of the district.

Proposed law provides that board members receive a \$75 per diem for each meeting they attend, not to exceed 12 meetings per year, and that the per diem is paid out of district funds.

Proposed law provides for the district's powers and duties, including but not limited to the following:

- (1) To acquire, purchase, lease as lessee, and hold and use any property, real, personal or mixed, tangible or intangible, or any interest therein necessary or desirable for its purposes, and to sell, transfer, lease as lessor, and dispose of any property or interest therein.
- (2) To acquire by purchase, donation, expropriation, lease, or otherwise and to construct, improve, maintain, and operate park and recreational facilities and to administer programs which it considers necessary to effectuate the district purposes.
- (3) To enter into agreements with any person or persons, corporation, association, or other entity, including public corporations, political subdivisions, the U.S. government and agencies thereof, the state or any of its agencies, or any combination thereof for the operation of park and recreation properties and facilities.
- (4) To fix, collect, and revise rates, charges, and rentals for parks facilities and services as necessary.
- (5) To borrow money and to pledge or grant a security device affecting all or part of its revenues, leases, rents, and other advantages as security for the loans.
- (6) To issue bonds for the purpose of constructing, acquiring, improving, maintaining, or extending park and recreational facilities of the district, subject to voter approval.

Proposed law regarding the Central Recreation District provides that:

- (1) The board has the authority for the 2025 through 2030 tax years, to levy and collect annually an ad valorem tax not to exceed 12 mills on the dollar of assessed valuation on all property within the district. Provides that the maximum assessment is inclusive of the ad valorem taxes currently levied by the commission on properties located within the geographic boundaries of the district for which the avails are pledged as security for bonded indebtedness. Provides that any new assessment or renewal of a current assessment is subject to voter approval. Provides that beginning with the 2031 tax year and thereafter, an ad valorem tax may be levied and collected, subject to voter approval. Provides that the avails of the taxes are to be used solely for acquisition, construction, improvement,

maintenance, and operation of park and recreational facilities or improvements and any legacy costs associated with the transition.

- (2) Effective July 1, 2025, the board acting on behalf of the district is granted the powers provided in proposed law. Specifically provides that as of July 1, 2025, the commission no longer has the authority to levy and collect any taxes within the geographic boundaries of the district except any ad valorem taxes or portion thereof which avails were pledged as security for bonded indebtedness and that the authority of the commission expires at the time and for the year in which the indebtedness is paid off.
- (3) The commission receives all ad valorem taxes levied and collected on properties located within the geographic boundaries of the district through June 30, 2025. Provides that beginning on July 1, 2025, and thereafter, the tax collector remits all ad valorem taxes levied and collected on properties located within the geographic boundaries of the district, including delinquent payments, to the district, except amounts required to be remitted to the commission for bonded indebtedness.
- (4) The district begins the actual operation of public park and recreation properties and facilities within its jurisdiction on July 1, 2025. Provides that beginning on the date the district begins such operation and thereafter, all lands, buildings, and improvements, facilities, and equipment and other property having title vested in the public and subject to management, administration, and control by the commission but located within the geographic boundaries of the district are subject to management, administration, and control of the district. Requires the commission to work cooperatively to transfer buildings, other facilities, assets, and equipment related to the facilities and assets located within the geographic boundaries of the district in an efficient and expeditious manner.
- (5) Effective July 1, 2025, the commission shall provide the districts with immediate and complete access to:
  - (a) All buildings and facilities within the district.
  - (b) All records including but not limited to maintenance, insurance, and warranty records associated with properties and other assets, including movables, to be transferred.
  - (c) All financial records associated with building, facilities, and other assets to be transferred, including those related to building maintenance, taxes, insurance, and indebtedness.
- (6) The commission is prohibited from:
  - (a) Interfering, or impeding in any way, with the processes to transfer the buildings and other facilities, property, equipment, and all other assets related to those items located within the geographical boundaries of the new district.

- (b) Selling, transferring, or otherwise removing any asset or thing of value, movable or immovable, corporeal or incorporeal, attributable to the properties and equipment to be transferred to the new district.
- (c) Incurring, transferring, or assigning any debt or other responsibility or obligation to properties to be transferred to the new district that is not properly attributable to those properties.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 33:4570, 4570.2, and 4570.4(B); Adds R.S. 33:4570.7)