

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2646

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Development
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to apiaries.

Brief Description: Modifying apiary regulation.

Sponsors: Representatives Rayburn, Foreman, Hansen, Chandler, Grant and Lisk.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Agriculture & Rural Development, February 3, 1994, DPS;
Appropriations, February 5, 1994, DPS(AG).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Rayburn, Chair; Kremen, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chappell; Grant; Karahalios and Roland.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Lisk and McMorris.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: One of the statutory duties of the Department of Agriculture is the administration of an apiary inspection program. Under this program, the director of the Department of Agriculture must provide regulation and inspection services, assure availability of bee colonies for pollination, facilitate the interstate movement of honey bees, promote improved agricultural practices, combat bee pests that pose an economic threat to the industry, and, in cooperation with the cooperative extension program of Washington State University, provide education to promote the vitality of the apiary industry. Registration and inspection fees and other charges levied under the program are deposited in the apiary inspection account within the Agricultural Local Fund.

Funding for the program was not provided as part of the department's portion of the 1993-95 budget.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The apiary inspection program is renamed the industry apiary program. A fee is established on the use of bee pollination services by growers of agricultural crops. The fee applies when growers receive such services from others and is in the amount of 50 cents for each setting of a hive used by the grower. The fee is paid by the grower, collected by the beekeeper, remitted to the department, and deposited in the apiary inspection account. This account is renamed the industry apiary program account. Revenues from these fees must be used to provide services to the apiary industry which assist in ensuring the vitality and availability of bees for commercial pollination services for the agricultural industry.

Persons, called brokers, who pollinate crops using hives that are owned by others must register with the director of the Department of Agriculture annually and pay an annual registration fee. It is the same fee that applies, under current law, to the owners of bee hives. Beekeepers resident in other states who operate hives in Washington must also register and pay the registration fee.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill authorized the director of the Department of Agriculture to set fees; the substitute sets the fees in statute and directs the use of revenues derived from the fees.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (1) Meetings have been held throughout the state on the expanded registration fees and on pollination fees to fund the apiary program. (2) The horticultural industry is having a tough marketing year, but it is the biggest customer of the apiary industry which is experiencing even harder times.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: In Favor: Bob Zahler, Washington State Beekeepers Association; Frank DeLong, Washington Horticultural Association; and Diane Dolstad, Washington State Department of Agriculture.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dorn; G. Fisher; Foreman; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; H. Myers; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Stevens; Talcott; Wang and Wolfe.

Staff: Nancy Stevenson (786-7137).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Agriculture & Rural Development: No new changes were recommended.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Funding is needed to continue the program. Without bees, certain crops are no longer viable. We want to be prepared to address killer bee problems in the future.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Diane Dolstad, Washington State Department of Agriculture (pro); and Jim Halstrom, Washington Horticulture Association (pro).