

ANALYSIS OF SB 5468

House Agriculture & Ecology Committee

March 20, 1997

BACKGROUND:

Nuisances. Certain agricultural activities conducted on farms and certain forest practices are not to be considered to be nuisances. These are agricultural activities and forest practices established before surrounding non-agricultural and non-forestry activities and undertaken in conformity with all applicable laws and rules. In addition, such an agricultural activity may not be restricted as to when it may be conducted. (RCW 7.48.305.)

Apiary Advisory Committee. The apiary laws establish an advisory committee to advise the Director of Agriculture regarding the administration of those laws. The advisory committee may consist of up to 11 members, including six people who own or keep bees in this state, the Director, and a representative of Washington State University's apiary program or cooperative extension. The advisory committee may include up to three representatives of growers who use bee pollination services. (RCW 15.60.010.)

SUMMARY:

Keeping bees for the pollination of agricultural products or gardens is expressly added to the list of agricultural activities that are eligible for the exemption from nuisance control provided by state law. (Section 2.)

The Commissioner of Public Lands and the Department of Fish and Wildlife must confer with the Apiary Advisory Committee to: promote beekeeping to maintain and enhance the pollination of plants for the production of commercial and noncommercial products; and to explore the benefits to resources that could result from locating additional pollinating bees on the lands they manage and the benefits to beekeepers of making additional pasture for domesticated bees available at a reasonable cost. The Commissioner and the Department must report to the Legislature by December 1, 1997, on actions taken to promote beekeeping to maintain and enhance the pollination of plants for the production of commercial and noncommercial products. (Sections 3 and 4.)

If requested by the Apiary Advisory Committee, the Director of Agriculture may establish by rule a model honey bee management system and provide copies of the system to local governments and citizens upon request. (Section 5.)

