

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5468

As Passed Senate, February 12, 1997

Title: An act relating to apiaries.

Brief Description: Promoting beekeeping operations.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Morton, Fraser, Newhouse, Oke and Jacobsen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Environment: 2/5/97 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/12/97, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Fraser, McAuliffe, Newhouse, Oke and Rasmussen.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The Apiary Advisory Committee consists of 11 members: six apiarists and three receivers of pollination services appointed by the Director of Agriculture, a representative from the apiary program or cooperative extension with Washington State University, and the Director of the Department of Agriculture.

Beekeepers provide hives to farmers for the pollination of a variety of agricultural crops. Bees need locations to utilize as pasture during periods when they are not being used to pollinate crops.

Currently, apiaries are included in the definition of a farm product used in the private nuisance law statute but the keeping of bees is not included in the definition of agricultural activity in the same statute.

Local governments have the authority to develop and adopt ordinances on a wide range of topics including the keeping of bees.

Summary of Bill: The Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Commissioner of Public Lands must confer with the Apiary Advisory Committee for the purpose of exploring the location of additional pollinating bees on state managed lands. Each department is to report to the Legislature by December 1, 1997 on actions taken as a result of conferring with the Apiary Advisory Committee.

The keeping of bees for pollination of agricultural products and gardens is added to the definition of agricultural activity used in the private agricultural nuisance statute.

Upon request and recommendation of the Apiary Advisory Committee, the director may establish by rule a model honey bee management system for the keeping of bees. The department is to make available copies of the model system to local governments or citizens upon request for their use as a guide in developing local ordinances. The model honey bee management system is to serve as an advisory tool to interested local governments.

The 1996 income to the apiary fund was about \$67,000 of which \$48,000 came from the pollination service fee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: More areas are needed to keep bees used for agricultural purposes, and lease rates should be the same for state agencies. Local ordinances should be as uniform as possible.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Robert Stump, Robin Milford, Pierce County Beekeepers (pro); Walt Isaackson, Olympia Beekeepers (pro); Bob Zahler, Washington State Beekeepers (pro).