

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 2995

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Rural Economic Development, February 23, 2000

Title: An act relating to apiaries.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions concerning apiaries.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Chandler and Linville.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/23/2000 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Gardner, Honeyford, Morton, Prentice, Snyder, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: There are two chapters of law, Chapter 17.24 and 15.60 RCW, that provide the Department of Agriculture with similar authorities to take action to control the spread of diseases and pests that affect honey bees.

Prior to 1994, the apiary program was funded largely by appropriations from the state general fund. In 1994, the Office of Financial Management deleted general fund monies for the program. As a result, two mechanisms were established to continue funding of the apiary program: a 50 cent per hive pollination service fee collected from the horticultural industry; and a hive registration fee for apiarists ranging from \$5 to \$300 depending on the number of registered hives.

The statutes also establish an Apiary Advisory Committee to advise the director regarding administration of the apiary program. Registration fees are to be used for the expenses of the advisory committee and may be used to support the department's apiary program or research projects. Pollination service fees are to be used to assist in ensuring the vitality and availability of bees for commercial agricultural pollination services.

Revenue from the program has not met expectations and the Department of Agriculture has ceased to employ an administrator for a state apiary program. However, the fees continue to be assessed by statute.

Summary of Amended Bill: The hive registration fee is retained but the pollination service fee is repealed. The Apiary Advisory Committee is no longer required to meet at least yearly and instead meets at the call of the director. The committee is to advise the director on issues affecting the industry and funding of research projects of benefit to the apiary

industry. Reimbursement of the advisory committee members for travel and per diem is changed from mandatory to at the discretion of the director.

The state apiary program and several of its functions are repealed including regulating queen bee rearing apiaries, regulating the importation of Africanized honey bees, and inspections of apiaries prior to entry into the state. Other functions such as conducting inspections to allow free movement of bees can continue to be provided under other statutory authorities.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Instead of taking effect immediately upon signature by the Governor, the effective date is delayed until June 30, 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2000.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect June 30, 2001.

Testimony For: The delay in the effective date will provide additional time to determine whether a bee commission or other mechanisms should be established to fund research to address problems faced by the bee industry.

Testimony Against: Concern was expressed regarding how the hive registration fee was originally established.

Testified: PRO: Dean Spellman, Clark County Beekeepers Assn.; Ron Brixey, Grower Member AAC; David Stokesberry, Harvard Robbins, Pierce County Beekeepers; Eric Olson, Olson's Honey; John Timmans, Pierce County; Bob Stump, WA State Beekeepers; Tim Hiatt; C. Ferguson, Jr., WA Pro. Beekeepers Assn.