

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6097

As Passed Senate, February 9, 1996

Title: An act relating to apiaries.

Brief Description: Promoting beekeeping operations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Agricultural Trade & Development (originally sponsored by Senator Rasmussen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Agricultural Trade & Development: 1/23/96 [DPS]. Passed Senate, 2/9/96, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & AGRICULTURAL TRADE & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6097 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; A. Anderson, Bauer, Morton, Newhouse and Snyder.

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, 1996 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The development of a honey bee management system that would serve as a guide in developing local ordinances is needed as an attempt to minimize the adoption of inconsistent ordinances by local governments.

Increased availability of land upon which to pasture bees is needed and state managed lands could be made available at reasonable rates for this purpose.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bob Zahler, Bob Stump, Robert Bower, WA State Beekeepers (pro); Ed Manary, Department of Fish and Wildlife (pro); Stan Boles, Department of Natural Resources (pro).