

Oregon State Legislature 2015 Regular Session

House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Public Hearing 3/19/2015 8:00 AM, HR D

House Bill 3362

The Oregon State Beekeepers Association wishes to express deep gratitude to the members of the Governor's Task Force on Pollinator Health. Each and every member worked very hard and worked well together. Many important and hopefully long term alliances were formed during the process as well.

House Bill 3362 is one result of that work, and to which we submit the following comments and recommendations:

Section 2. ORS.090 was in effect for many years back in the day when Oregon had a hive inspection program and hive inspectors that worked for the ODA. When the inspection program ended around 1989, the requirement for beekeepers to list each individual location of their hives on their annual apiary license application was dropped. Still on the books, but the requirement was dropped. Since then, only the beekeepers address and contact info is required to obtain an apiary license.

I just want to make sure that everyone understands that the listing of commercial beekeepers hives per location was a highly flawed requirement in its day, and cannot have any accuracy without the institution of an elaborate separate system of tracking. Section 2 paragraph (3) requires that registration, along with the list of locations shall be made before June 1 of each year. Due to the continual movement of bee hives for pollination, the list will be completely inaccurate prior to July 1. In other words, the list will be guaranteed accurate, **ONLY** for the day that it is written.

Oregon Beekeepers prefer to retain the current system of providing beekeeper address and contact information on our licenses. That information should be accurate.

Many Oregon beekeepers are asking, "What about the tens of thousands of honey bee hives that come into Oregon from out of state to pollinate crops? What shall their registration requirements be? How will the ODA track their locations?"

Section 3 paragraph (2) All moneys collected pursuant to ORS 602.090 shall be spent on honeybee and native bee research.

The Oregon State Beekeepers Association requests that the language in Section 3 paragraph(2) be amended to read as follows:

All moneys collected pursuant to ORS 602.090 shall be spent on honey bee research at the Oregon State University Bee Lab.

Oregon commercial beekeepers, (and make no mistake about it; if a per hive assessment is instituted, commercial beekeepers will foot the lion's share of the moneys collected) appreciate native pollinators as much as everyone in this room. We benefit from their pollination just the same as the clerks, reporters, legislators and everyone in this room. However, in our beekeeping operations, and hives, we have absolutely no connection to any pollinator other than honey bees.

For example, we could take a portion of moneys assessed on a per hive basis and fund salmon run restoration, or oak savanna preservation. But of course that would be preposterous! As commercial beekeepers, we conduct no work on salmon or oak trees. We also do not work with native pollinators.

There is no basis or justification for any amount of the proposed per hive assessment moneys to be spent on any research other than honey bee research. And honey bee research is badly needed.

What we are talking about here in practice, is an *industry assessment*. The Industry that will pay the lions share of this assessment is commercial beekeeping operations. The research funded by this assessment should serve the funding source, mainly, honeybees and beekeeping.

In addition, paragraph 2 does not pinpoint the recipient of moneys collected for honey bee research.

We request that the moneys collected are distributed to the Oregon State University Honey Bee Lab for honey bee research.

Many beekeepers are asking, "What about the tens of thousands of honey bee hives that come into Oregon from out of state to pollinate crops? What shall their assessment be? How will the ODA collect an assessment from them?"

In conclusion, and I hate to have to mention this, but this bill if passed will be of voluntary compliance.

ORS 602.090 has always been on the honor system. If you look at the list of registered beekeeping operations, it is a list of the good guys and gals. Oregon has an estimated 70,000 managed honey bee hives but only 137 currently registered apiaries.

If we want to continue and increase participation, *fairness* must be a core principle in the program.

I'm happy to take questions.

Thank you.

Harry Vanderpool, Oregon State Beekeepers Association Vice President.

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