AB 2755: Beehive Protection Act

SUMMARY

AB 2755 creates additional civil and criminal penalties for unlawful actions against beehives.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

California has the largest beekeeping industry of any state in the nation. Around three-fourths of the country’s documented commercial honeybee crop pollination is conducted in California. The state is also the leader in honey production.

California has the largest beekeeping industry of any state in the County. Nearly 500,000 colonies of bees are operated by 400 commercial and semi-commercial beekeepers. Nearly three-quarters of the country’s documented commercial honeybee crop pollination is conducted in California, adding over six billion dollars to the value of California agricultural products.

The bee population has also been decreasing due to Colony Collapse Disorder and other factors associated with a lack of adequate bee forage. This decline in bees threatens the food supply and has increased the costs of pollination. According to a UC Davis apiculturist, reports of failing colonies are numerous this winter, when bee colonies are in most demand, and hive rental can be in upwards of up to $200.¹

This tightening of supply coincides with alarming incidences of bee hive thefts.¹ One beekeeper in Yuba City reported a loss of beehives valued at $100,000, which includes both foregone pollination income and the value of the hives. Since January 1, 2016, 1734 hive thefts have been reported to the California State Beekeepers Association. This type of theft is occurring across the state.

SOLUTION

AB 2755 provides for civil damages of three times the value of bees that are unlawfully taken, possessed, harbored, or transported from their beehive. These civil damages will be added to the Food and Agriculture Code. This will dis-incentivize the theft of bees and assist in restoring the losses of beekeepers.

AUTHOR’S STATEMENT

“Bees pollinate some of California’s most valuable crops, such as almonds. Our farmers are struggling with a dwindling bee population and increasing costs associated with crop pollination. Beekeepers throughout the state are under a tremendous amount of pressure to keep up with the demand for pollination and to overcome many environmental circumstances to maintain healthy bee hives. Bee hive thefts have been on the rise this year, therefore now is the time to protect beekeepers’ property and to keep this segment of our agricultural economy vibrant.”

SUPPORT

California State Beekeepers Association
(Sponsor)
California Farm Bureau Federation

¹ “Beehive thefts add to pressures at bloom time”. Ag Alert, 10 Feb. 2016.
http://www.agalert.com/story/?id=9297
OPPOSITION

None on File

MORE INFORMATION

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