

Intent and Purpose of Recommendations on 2019 H.205

from the Vermont Beekeeper's Association

February 26, 2019

- The Vermont Beekeeper's Association (VBA) recommends removing the exemption for treated article seed. We are not recommending a total ban on neonicotinoid treated seed, rather that neonicotinoids be handled as restricted use pesticides.
- The VBA recommends increased inspections by the State Apiary Program of colonies imported into Vermont. Thousands of honey bee colonies are imported into Vermont and sold each year. It has been common to find imported colonies infested with pests such as small hive beetles and parasitic mites that spread to existing Vermont honey bee colonies. These pests along with diseases such as American foulbrood or European foulbrood can devastate honeybee colonies. This discourages beginning beekeepers; many have already given up on their beekeeping endeavors. These pests and diseases also make it difficult for commercial or sideline beekeepers to make a living from their agricultural honeybee products.
 - We recommend establishing a fee for bee colonies that are inspected. This fee would be devoted to the State Apiary Program to offset the costs of these inspections of and to assist with educational efforts on beekeeping and pollinator protection statewide.

The fees would, in part, support the State Apiculturist on these efforts.

- Further, the VBA recommends establishing a position of "Pollinator Protection Specialist" that would be funded by the fees collected from inspections of imported bee colonies.

The original version of H.205 required new beekeepers to become certified. It's not clear that a certification requirement would improve upon the knowledge and skills already being provided by experienced beekeepers on a regular and ongoing basis. In fact, it may discourage entry into beekeeping.

The VBA recommends eliminating the certification requirement and replacing it with the Pollinator Protection Specialist position.

The **Pollinator Protection Specialist** position would assist the State Apiculturist on inspections for imported colonies during the busy Spring and Summer "crunch times" for inspections. It would assist the VBA and local beekeeping clubs on educational efforts for beekeepers and the public. It would serve as a liaison with farmers to help them understand and minimize the adverse effects of their operations on pollinators.

The VBA and local beekeeping clubs around the state of Vermont already conduct training, education, and certification throughout the year for new and existing beekeepers. The new position would enhance that effort.