

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 113

(Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Agriculture)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Department of Agriculture - Bees, Bee Colonies, and Used Bee Equipment -
Transportation and Shipment**

This departmental bill repeals the requirement that a person request an entry permit from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) before shipping or transporting into the State any bee colony or used bee equipment. The bill also repeals the requirement that the colony or equipment be accompanied by the entry permit when it is shipped or transported. However, any colony or used bee equipment shipped or transported into the State must still be accompanied by an inspection certificate from the state of origin. The certificate, along with other information, must still be submitted to MDA before shipping or transporting a colony or used bee equipment into the State. The bill also modifies a provision governing MDA's enforcement actions so that those provisions apply in any case where a colony or bee is transported into the State in a manner that does not meet applicable requirements.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: MDA has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: Before a person may ship or transport any bee colony or used bee equipment into the State, the person must request an entry permit by submitting certain information to MDA, including an inspection certificate from the state of origin. Any bee colony or used bee equipment shipped or transported into the State must be accompanied by (1) an entry permit issued by MDA and (2) a valid inspection certificate issued by an authorized apiary inspector of the state of origin that states that the colony or equipment is disease free based on an inspection by that inspector within a time period determined by MDA.

Any queen bee or packaged bee shipped or transported into the State must be accompanied by a valid certificate issued by an authorized apiary inspector of the state of origin that states that the bee is from a disease free colony.

A person who receives a delivery of a colony or bee transported into the State without the required documents must immediately give notice to MDA of the delivery. Any colony or bee that is transported into the State that is not accompanied by the required documents is restricted to an area MDA designates and may not be moved. MDA must give the owner notice that unless the colony or bee is removed from the State within 24 hours, it may be destroyed by MDA at the owner's expense.

Background: In addition to the requirements applicable to bees, bee colonies, and used bee equipment shipped or transported into the State, beekeepers must annually register each colony that they maintain with MDA, the agency responsible for inspecting apiaries and honey houses. A person is also prohibited from keeping a colony or possessing bee equipment that is infected with an infectious bee disease and must notify MDA of an infected colony. MDA has the authority to quarantine an apiary containing an infected colony or bee equipment and order treatment and/or destruction of an infected colony or bee equipment.

MDA indicates that eliminating the requirement that an entry permit be obtained from MDA before shipping or transporting any bee colony or used bee equipment into the State is intended to simplify the process of importing bees into Maryland. In addition to the requirements under the law (that are unchanged by the bill) that a person send the inspection certificate from the state of origin to MDA and that it accompany the colony or used bee equipment transported or shipped, MDA also receives copies of inspection certificates directly from origin states. MDA issued 16 entry permits in 2015. In certain cases where bees are being transported from states that do not have inspection programs, MDA advises that it works with beekeepers to inspect colonies after they are transported into the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland State Beekeepers Association, Inc., Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 22, 2016
mel/lgc

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Department of Agriculture – A Bee, Bee Colony and Used Bee Equipment

BILL NUMBER: SB 113

PREPARED BY: Carol Holko
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PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

 X WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON
MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

 WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND
SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Nearly all Maryland beekeepers are small businesses or hobbyists. This bill will simplify the process for moving honey bee colonies and used equipment into the state. There will be no expenses incurred.