

Re: Opposition to Bill S6182-a & A08431, "Relates to bee health and the beekeeping industry".

Senator Jen Metzger

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Dear Senator Metzger,

I strongly request that you table Bill S6182-a until 2021. Beekeepers throughout NYS are now scrambling to obtain information on this bill, and are beginning to organize and voice their opposition.

This bill has never been discussed, announced, or open for comment to New York beekeepers prior to introduction to the NYS Legislature. Most importantly, the beekeepers who are already registered have received no notification or request for input, as the primary stakeholders. Until improved channels of communication are established with the beekeepers of NYS by NYS Agriculture and Markets, this bill should not move forward.

In 2007 there was a similar scenario, where legislation was quietly slipped into the legislature at the end of the NYS legislative session without the knowledge of most beekeepers. The Bill was enacted as law, but a major effort by NYS beekeepers was undertaken to successfully repeal the law in 2010. A similar scenario occurred in June 2018 for Bill S8274/A10362, with the exception of the bill being withdrawn by Assemblyman Magee because of the overwhelming opposition from beekeepers throughout NYS. Please see the website FreeNYbees.com for a petition and comments.

Beekeepers throughout the state are opposed to any mandatory registration to require traceability of hives and beekeepers, citing: lack of transparency by Albany, lack of services, misuse of information, potential corruption, creating onerous or politically motivated regulations or practices, and potentially adding fees to an already costly profession.

Since 2010 there has been a registration form on the NYS Agriculture & Market website, and over the years many beekeepers have voluntarily registered their apiaries, but: The current registration form states that by registering, you will be notified of bee health developments--that is not true, as communication has been lacking.

Albany needs to provide notification and communication now for the beekeepers already registered for: county spraying for mosquitos, use of bee toxic substances for tick abatement, outbreaks of honey bee disease such as American Foulbrood, before making promises of future notification and requiring mandatory registration, otherwise they are just collecting names.

Please stop the passage of this bill and table Bill S6182-a.

Sincerely,