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## **Support HB 1723**

### **Reduce Unnecessary Regulations on Beekeepers**

Currently a beekeeper must obtain a permit from the Chief Apiary Inspector prior to transporting honey bees across a county line. Violation is a Class C misdemeanor. This intrastate transport permit requirement was supposed to help control the spread of bee diseases & pests and stop the migration of Africanized bees, but has failed to do so. The current regulation only serves to burden beekeepers with unnecessary paper work and fees.

HB1723 would eliminate the county to county transport permit and allow beekeepers to transport bees across county lines without the need to spend ineffective time and money.

#### **The Facts About County-to-County Transport Permit Requirement**

- Since the provision's inception in 1983, Varroa destructor (a parasitic mite) and the Small Hive Beetle have infested all beekeeping regions of Texas. Additionally Africanized bees have moved into all parts of Texas that they are able to naturally survive.
- Feral honeybees and flying pests don't pay attention to boundaries such as county lines.
- The Texas Apiary Inspection Service (TAIS) does not appear to have ever denied a permit request nor have issued a citation for failure to have a permit. So the requirement hasn't stopped anyone from moving bees (healthy or diseased) within the state – it just makes them file paperwork and pay fees in order to do so.
- Once issued, a permit is good for up to 12 months, although a colony could easily become infected during that time period.
- There are approximately 4,000 beekeepers in Texas. Texas Apiary Inspection Service records show that on average less than 250 permits are issued each year. This requirement is not only ineffective, it imposes arbitrary burdens just on those who happen to know of it and decide to comply.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Repealing the intrastate transport permit was part of the larger HB 1293 introduced in the 2017 legislative session. The repeal provision of HB 1293 was the one part that everyone supported at that time.

*For more information, contact Christi Baughman, [Secretary@LoneStarBeekeepers.org](mailto:Secretary@LoneStarBeekeepers.org) or Bruce Bonnett, [President@LoneStarBeekeepers.org](mailto:President@LoneStarBeekeepers.org).*

## What HB1723 Does and Does Not Do

- HB1723 does just one thing: it repeals the current permit requirement, so that individuals can legally move bees across county lines within the State of Texas without applying and paying for a permit.
  
- HB1723 does **not** affect the powers of the Texas Apiary Inspection Service (TAIS) or the Chief Apiary Inspector (CAI) to address bee diseases. The TAIS and CAI can still address diseased hives by issuing quarantines or ordering the destruction of diseased hives.
  
- HB1723 does **not** impact individuals who are doing bee removals.
  - The intrastate transport permit is not required to perform bee removals.
    - The intrastate transport permit only allows bees to be transported across county lines.
  - Under Texas Occupations Code Ch. 1951, in order to remove honey bees from a manmade structure or natural environment, an individual must either:
    - have a pest control license, or
    - register with the Chief Apiary Inspector and not use pesticides on the bees.
  
- HB1723 does not affect the listing of people performing bee removal services.
  - Since bee removers are required to register with TAIS, the agency can use whatever application form it deems appropriate to gather the information and provide the list on the website, as it does now.
  
- HB1723 does not negatively affect TAIS fiscally.
  - The loss of permit fees is offset by not having to administer the permit program.

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