

Feb 5, 2025



Dear North Dakota Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Bill SB 2343.

Imagine asking our state's grain and cattle farmers to give up 10-25% of their cropland—this is, in essence, what SB 2343 proposes. While I understand the bill's intent, it is using a broad, sweeping approach to solve a problem that requires a more targeted solution. This bill would inflict significant harm on North Dakota's beekeeping industry.

Here are some key points to consider:

1. **Relocating beehives is not a simple fix.** Beekeepers can't just "move" their hives farther from roads. Finding suitable locations for bees is extremely challenging, and it's rarely possible to simply shift them half a mile further away from existing spots near roads.
2. **Overcrowding is not an option.** Beekeepers cannot simply add more hives to locations already more than half a mile from roads—this is akin to overgrazing a pasture. We wouldn't ask cattle ranchers to add 20% more cattle to an existing pasture, so why would we do that to beekeepers?
3. **Proximity to roads is not the root issue.** Beehives located more than half a mile from a roadway may still allow bees to travel at ground level to forage on the other side. Hives placed within 50 yards of a road, but with a treeline between them, have no impact on traffic because the bees fly over the trees and the road. The proposed solution simply doesn't address the problem effectively.
4. **This bill threatens the state's top-ranking honey production.** North Dakota is the nation's leading honey producer. Implementing this bill will not only reduce honey production by 10-25%, it could drive many beekeepers into bankruptcy. Our industry is already grappling with rising costs and falling honey prices, not to mention the challenges of keeping our bees healthy. Losing a significant portion of honey-producing areas will be devastating for the state's beekeeping industry.
5. **Legal concerns and landowner relationships.** It's been established that honeybees are considered "wild" animals when outside their hives. We must be careful not to create unnecessary fear among landowners who allow bees on their properties. The prior version of this bill, which raised concerns about potential liability, has already led to lost hive locations.
6. **Existing laws already provide solutions.** The goals of this bill can be met through current law. Landowners can request that bees be removed, and the state's apiary department can take action to relocate hives from problematic areas.

We should focus on finding solutions that minimize harm rather than imposing drastic measures. There are alternatives to this bill that should be explored.

Sincerely,

Michael Lamb, Owner

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