

February 1, 2025

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
RE: SB 2343

### **IN OPPOSITION**

Bees are fascinating creatures, are essential to the world and, they fly. Water and vegetation dictate where they fly. That survival location may reach distances up to 3 miles.

Backer Bees has been a registered beekeeper in North Dakota since 2003 and has expanded to keeping upwards of 3,000 colonies. Locations, where hives are placed, are areas on privately owned land. The specific area is dictated by the landowner. Ease of access and limited damage to property are the key factors when deciding on the work area for the hives for the months of *June to October*. We enter this area 10-12 times throughout these *four prime honey producing months*.

Regulating a 1/2 mile placement would impact 20% of our established locations. Therefore, impact 20% of our income. In a farmers world, 20% is substantial. We already face the loss of 30-40% of our livestock each year, so this additional percentage would be devastating.

North Dakota beekeepers must abide by certain regulations and licenses to keep apiaries. One regulation is to have the beekeepers name and phone number available in each location. In the 22 years of beekeeping, we have received less than a handful of calls from location neighbors with questions or concerns. Most are due to lack of water in the area so, bees being attracted to watering areas. All concerns were resolved with the landowners desires and rights, as well as the health of the bees, in the forefront.

This proposed distance of 1/2 mile from a state or federal highway impacts our business in several dysfunctional ways. 20% of our long established agreements with landowners would be impacted which would require us to seek alternate areas.

The greatest impacted being a 2 acre personally owned lot that includes a 30 x 50 building and constructed area that has been precisely leveled and packed. It is used for loading/unloading semis and a holding area. This \$150,000+ essential investment would be useless and we would then be forced to find another area to safely bring in semis. This area, that is right off of the highway, is pleasing to truckers for ease of movement, access, and weather related issues. We also load honey trucks off this lot and this happens during the months of October-March when weather is a massive issue.

North Dakota is the top honey producing state in the country and has been since 2003. In 2023, North Dakota alone made 38.3 million pounds of honey that has a value of \$67.8 million.

SB 2343 would substantially impact over 350 North Dakota registered beekeepers, a \$67.8 million honey industry, a \$15 billion bee pollination industry, trucking industry, beekeeping supplies and materials, apiary worker income, and more importantly, threaten domestic agriculture and the food production system.

Where does this stop? June bugs, dragonflies, grasshoppers, mosquitos....regulation of all insects?

For the above reasons, we are in strong **OPPOSITION** to SB 2343.

Respectfully,  
Dusty and Pat Backer  
Backer Bees, Center, ND

