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**NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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**Testimony of Samantha Brunner
State Apiary Inspector
Senate Bill 2343
Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
Fort Union Room
February 6, 2025**

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I am Samantha Brunner, State Apiary Inspector for the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) testifying on behalf of Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. I am here today to provide information on the beekeeping industry in North Dakota in relation to Senate Bill 2343.

The NDDA oversees beekeeping in the state through licensing and registration of beekeepers and apiary (hive) locations. In 2024 there were 352 licensed beekeepers in the state managing 829,617 honey bee colonies. Those bees are placed on 21,074 registered locations. I presented some information a couple years ago on the growth of different sectors of beekeeping. Our hobby beekeeping industry continues to grow, now making up about 43% of the licensed beekeepers in the state. The number of commercial and sideline beekeeping operations has remained relatively steady over the past 5 years.

North Dakota is the number one honey producing state in the nation, according to NASS producing over 38.3 million pounds in 2023. North Dakota has held this title since 2004, while the other rankings vary year to year, we typically produce about twice as much honey as the state ranked second in honey production, in 2023 it was South Dakota with just over 18.4 million pounds.

The proposed bill would eliminate approximately 2,750 locations across the state, resulting in a loss of approximately 13% of the registered locations. This impact would be felt the most by our

hobby beekeepers, approximately 1/3 of them would lose locations, most of them the only location they have registered in their own back yard. The Roosevelt Zoo in Minot and the Dakota Zoo in Bismarck both have honey bee colonies that would be disallowed. The department also has a hive located at the Gateway to Science building in Bismarck that would also need to be relocated.

Currently in our department we have 4 full time employees that give apiary their priority in the summer, this isn't their only responsibility, but it is a majority of their time in the active summer months. We also hire 2 summer seasonal employees that again focus on honey bees but do also assist with other department tasks. This bill would stretch our current staffing resources beyond what we are capable at handling. This bill would require the addition of staffing, funds and additional authority to carry out the intent of the bill. Including the ability to enter on private property, without permission from the landowner to remove hives and equipment.

Chairman Luick and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Apiary Program 2024

Licensed Beekeepers

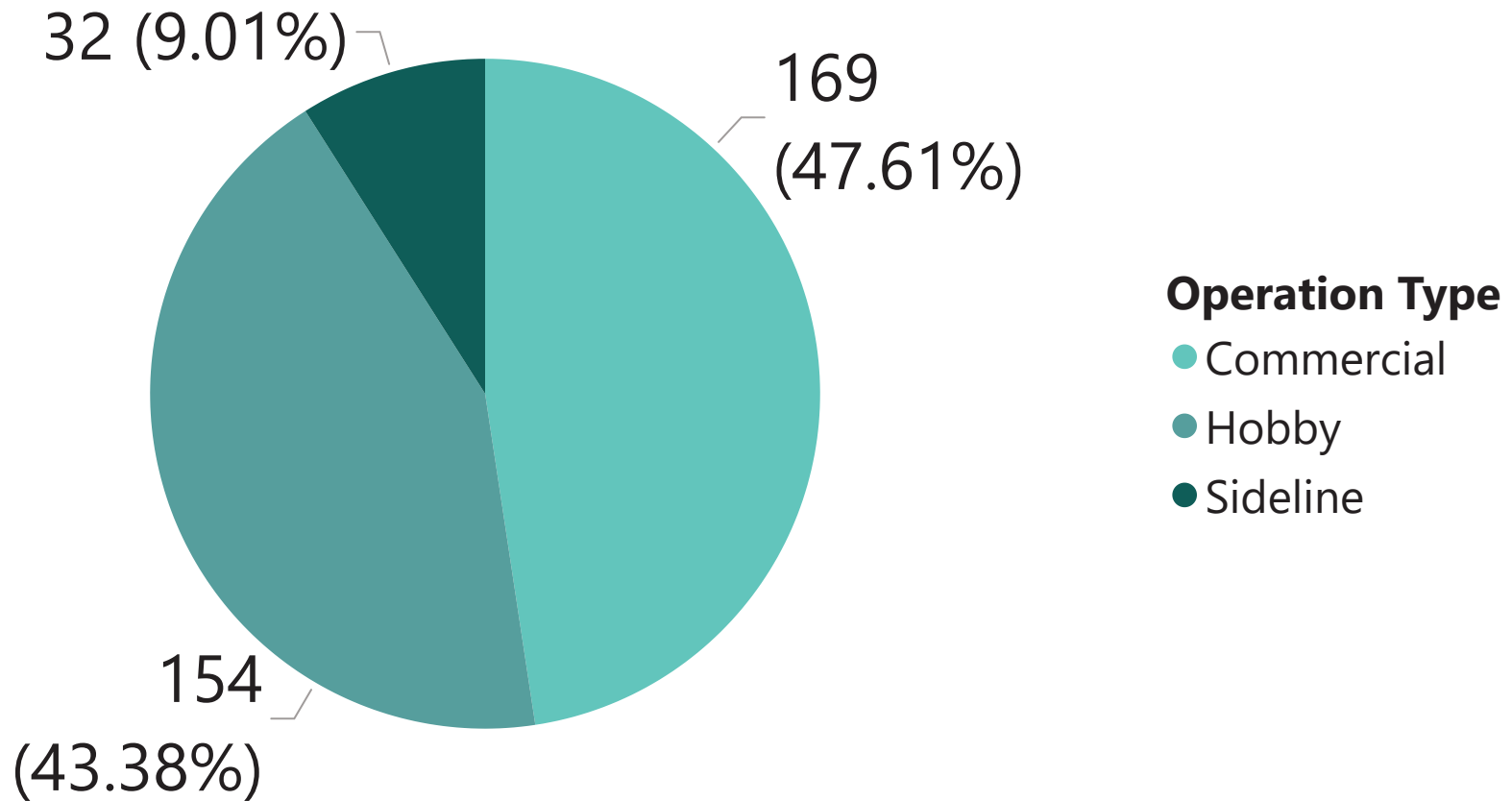
352

Total Colonies

829,617

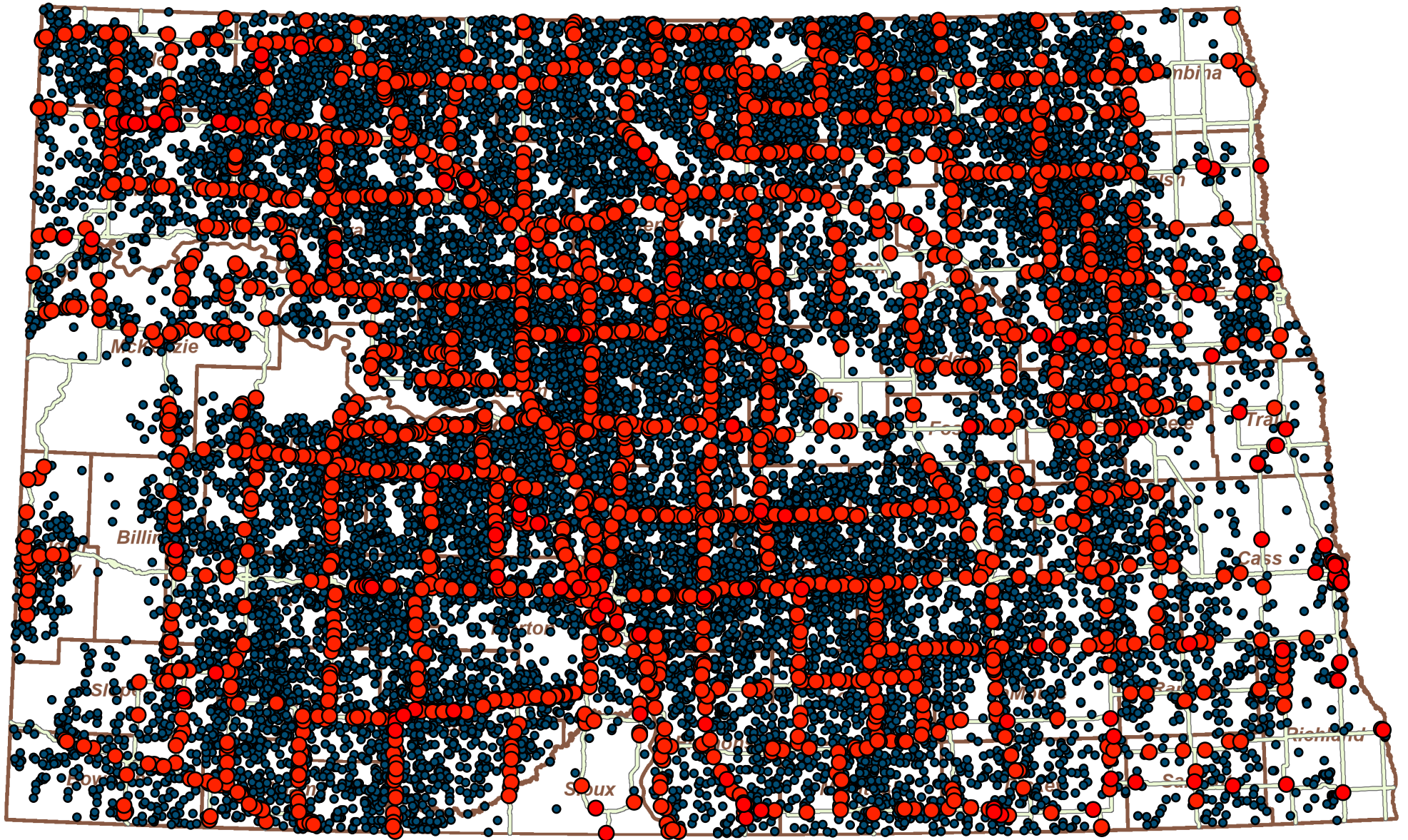
Registered Locations

21,074



Hobby: 1-50 colonies Sideline: 51-500 Commercial: 501+

Registered Bee Locations



- Locations within 1/2 mile of state or federal road
- Registered Apiary Locations