

Rep. Loudenbeck: Authors bill promoting beekeeping

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Madison - Representative Amy Loudenbeck (R-Clinton) along with Senator Steve Nass (R-Whitewater), began circulating a bill for co-sponsorship that will define beekeeping in state statute and will provide beekeepers with the same exemptions from state sales and use tax certain property items and services sold to farming and agriculture businesses that already exist for others.

"Beekeeping is vital to agriculture in Wisconsin and should receive the same sales tax exemptions as other farming businesses. In recognition of the important role that beekeeping plays in production agriculture, we are introducing LRB 2190/1 which expands these same exemptions to beekeeping," said Rep. Loudenbeck.

Bees play an important and under-appreciated role in the world's food supply chain. Many of the foods that we all enjoy, like cranberries, broccoli, squash, apples, coffee and almonds, are reliant on pollination by bees. In fact, of the top 100 crop species that provide nearly 90% of the global food supply, 71 of those crops are pollinated by bees. Not to mention, the two important direct products that bees provide, honey and wax.

Bees are facing unprecedented challenges to their survival, and are disappearing at an alarming rate due to pesticides, parasites, disease, and habitat loss. Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has also taken a toll on the bee population. While the threat of CCD has somewhat subsided in recent years, CCD demonstrates the fragile nature of our bee populations, and the need to continue building their population.

The bill is currently circulating for co-sponsorship, and will be formally introduced in the Senate and Assembly next week. It will then be referred to committee to have public hearings.