

# Washington beekeepers win farmer status

## Legislature makes tax relief for apiarists permanent

By **DON JENKINS**  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — In the eyes of Washington's tax law, beekeepers are now part of agriculture.

Apiarists were declared "farmers" in a sprawling tax-cutting bill signed by Gov. Jay Inslee.

Senate Bill 6057 grants more than a dozen tax breaks to industries, including aluminum smelters, food processors, data centers and newspapers.

Wrapped into the bill was a provision that will give beekeepers the same tax status as other agricultural producers.

Beekeepers will be exempt

from paying state business taxes on money they collect for pollination services or by selling their products, such as honey, wholesale. They also will be exempt from sales taxes for production expenses, such as bee feed and chemicals to keep hives healthy.

Any beekeeper with at least one colony qualifies for at least some of the exemptions. Budget writers estimated the loss in taxes at about \$100,000 a year.

"I was really pleased (legislators) took common sense advice and made beekeepers the equivalent of farmers as far as the state is concerned," said Ephrata commercial beekeeper Tim Hiatt, legislative director for the Washington State Beekeepers Association.

"When we told people about this, they would say, 'Aren't beekeepers already part of agriculture?'"

Legislators granted tempo-

rary tax relief to beekeepers in 2008 to help them cope with high mortality rates. The tax relief was due to expire in 2017. SB 6057 makes the tax breaks permanent.

Sen. Jim Honeyford, R-Sunnyside, sponsored the honeybee legislation. "Sen. Honeyford was our great champion on this one," Hiatt said.

Beekeepers and Honeyford argued that beekeepers are a vital part of food production. Hiatt and others said that out-of-state beekeepers provide pollination services in Washington but leave without paying business taxes. "That really was a matter of fairness," Hiatt said.

The tax breaks, including the one for beekeepers, were rolled into one bill that will cost the state an estimated \$35.2 million over the next two years in lost revenue. One legislator remarked that there

was something in the bill for every lawmaker to like and dislike, but it was a compromise package agreed to by House and Senate budget writers.

The bill passed the Senate 38-10 and the House 77-21.

The new tax treatment gave beekeepers one legislative victory this year.

Hiatt said the beekeepers association will renew its push next year for more funding for bee research at the Washington State University, a recommendation made last year by a Washington State Department of Agriculture work group.

Beekeepers also will continue to advocate for a pilot program to plant pollen-rich flowers on ground where noxious weeds have been eradicated. A bill this year was bogged down by concerns that the program would inadvertently introduce new problem plants on the landscape.

## Duwamish leaders say fight for fed recognition not over

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Leaders of the Seattle-area Duwamish say their fight for federal recognition as an Indian Tribe isn't over.

The U.S. Department of Interior issued a final decision July 2 denying the Duwamish official recognition, which would have entitled them to federal benefits such as housing, fishing rights and the possibility of operating a casino.

The Seattle Times reports that tribal chairwoman

Cecile Hansen said Wednesday the group is working on its response but that there will likely be an appeal.

In its decision, the federal government said there wasn't enough evidence to show the current group continued from the previously existing community or that it evolved as a group from the historical Duwamish tribe.

The tribe of about 600 began its legal quest for federal status in 1977. The case has had twists and turns.

## Traffic stinks? Consider those near portable toilet spill

The Associated Press

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Think your rush-hour commute stinks? Consider the plight of Tuesday afternoon drivers on Interstate 5 near Bellingham, Washington, when a truck hauling portable

toilets crashed in the southbound lanes.

No, the tanks were not empty.

KOMO-TV of Seattle reports that the two-vehicle crash blocked two freeway lanes for about an hour while crews cleared the wreckage and a

hazardous materials team cleaned up about 20 gallons of spilled — material.

At its worst, the backup extended five miles.

State Patrol Trooper Mark Francis says there were only minor injuries.



Submitted Photo

The otter pup is pictured at Chintimini Wildlife Center, before his transfer to the Oregon Zoo.

## Rehabilitated otter pup arrives at Oregon Zoo

The Associated Press

CORVALLIS — A river otter pup rescued and rehabilitated in Corvallis is one of the newest residents at the Oregon Zoo in Portland.

The Corvallis Gazette-Times reports that the pup was a few months old when rescued. Katherine Hick of the Chintimini Wildlife Center says he was underweight, dehydrated and had sores on two paws from walking on hot pavement.

Hick says the shelter prefers to return animals to the wild, but the pup wasn't able to be properly socialized and otters are very social animals. She worried he would become a misfit and fail to thrive in the wild.

The pup was instead moved to Oregon Zoo on July 2 to live with two other river otters.

The zoo says it plans to put all three otters on display later this summer.



Kyle Moore/Seattle Fire Department / AP

Lori McCallister of Project Breathe tries a dog oxygen mask on a dog named Emmy, Tuesday in Seattle, at a news conference to announce the donation of 20 pet oxygen masks to the department by Invisible Fence Brand of Seattle. The masks will be used to resuscitate animals overcome by smoke and they can also be used on pets as small as guinea pigs or mice.

## Seattle fire crews receive 20 pet oxygen masks

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — The Seattle Fire Department has a new set of tools to save some of their most helpless fire victims.

A company called Invisible Fence Brand of Seattle donated 20 pet oxygen masks to the department on Monday. They will be used to resuscitate animals overcome by smoke.

Chief Harold Scoggins

says the masks can save animals overcome by carbon monoxide.

Each mask comes with a small, medium and large face piece that is cone-shaped to fit a snout. The can be used on pets as small as guinea pigs and mice as well as larger dogs.

Since the pet oxygen program began, the masks have been used at more than a half dozen fire scenes to successfully resuscitate pets.

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Salary Range is \$11.50 - \$13.50/hour, plus benefits (depending upon experience)

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