

ASSEMBLY, No. 2354

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 19, 1996

By Assemblyman ARNONE

1 A SUPPLEMENT to "An Act making appropriations for the support of
2 the State Government and the several public purposes for the fiscal
3 year ending June 30, 1997 and regulating the disbursement
4 thereof," approved June 28, 1996 (P.L.1996, c.42).

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6 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
7 of New Jersey:

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9 1. In addition to the amounts appropriated under P.L.1996, c.42,
10 there is appropriated out of the General Fund the following sum for
11 the purpose specified:

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14 DIRECT STATE SERVICES
15 10 Department of Agriculture
16 40 Community Development and Environmental Management
17 49 Agricultural Resources, Planning, and Regulation
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19 02-3320 Plant Pest and Disease Control \$300,000
20 Special Purpose:
21 Honeybee Research (\$180,000)
22 Honeybee Inspection Program
23 Expansion (\$110,000)
24 Honeybee Pest and Disease Public
25 Education and Outreach (\$10,000)
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27 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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30 STATEMENT

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32 This bill would appropriate \$300,000 for honeybee programs in
33 the State, as follows: \$180,000 would be used to fund honeybee
34 research efforts, especially with regard to honeybee pests and
35 diseases, by an academic or other institution or institutions in the
36 State as determined by the Department of Agriculture; \$60,000 to
37 restore the position of a second bee inspector or apiarist in the
38 Department of Agriculture and \$50,000 to provide for two part-time

1 seasonal bee inspectors; and \$10,000 to fund public education and
2 outreach efforts to beekeepers, especially hobbyists, with respect to
3 honeybee pests and diseases.

4 The State's honeybee population has declined markedly due to an
5 infestation of two varieties of mite and the recent long and hard
6 winters. It has been estimated that perhaps 60% of the kept
7 honeybees in the State were lost this past winter. The wild honeybee
8 (which is the State insect) has virtually disappeared from the Garden
9 State. The problem is not unique to New Jersey, however. The mite
10 infestations are occurring throughout the country but especially
11 impact the Northeast because the cold weather prevents the bees from
12 producing continuous broods throughout the year (which help the
13 bees outlast the infestations). Approximately 30 to 40% of the
14 honeybee colonies in the State are kept for commercial purposes, i.e.,
15 they are leased to pollinate various fruit and vegetable crops. Thus,
16 a healthy honeybee population is critical to the success of certain
17 types of agriculture. Hobbyists too are interested in maintaining
18 healthy hives in order to ensure good honey production.

19 At this time hardly any research on honeybee pests and diseases
20 is being conducted in the Northeast. The apiary research position at
21 Rutgers University was eliminated about 25 years ago. Also, very
22 little is being done at the federal level.

23 The Department of Agriculture presently employs one person
24 whose duties include inspecting honeybee colonies around the State.
25 This inspector inspects all of the commercial honeybee colonies in the
26 State at least once per year, but cannot possibly inspect all of the
27 hobbyists' colonies. No inspection fee is charged either for the
28 commercial beekeeper or the hobbyist.

29 The Pennsylvania Legislature recently appropriated \$180,000 to
30 Penn State University to conduct research on honeybees. This bill
31 would match that effort and help address the lack of funding in the
32 region for this important purpose, especially with respect to
33 overcoming the devastation of honeybee colonies caused by the mite
34 infestations.

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39 Appropriates \$300,000 for honeybee research, public educational
40 efforts, and inspections.