

## **Here's a legislative update from the WSBA Legislative Chair, Tim Hiatt:**

HB 1654 establishes a pilot project to replace noxious weeds that are good bee forage with non-noxious weeds that are still bee forage. If passed, this bill would help state government craft recommendations and procedures to promote good bee forage to replace noxious weed bee forage. This bill originated in the House and passed the Agriculture committee, the General Government committee, Rules, and passed on the floor. Now it goes to the Senate and is assigned to the Natural Resources committee. We have some pro-honey bee members on that committee, so we're optimistic of this bill's chances.

SB 5017 will have beekeepers be considered farmers by the state: This bill originated in the Senate, passed the Agriculture committee, and is waiting for action in the Ways & Means committee. Because it contains a tax change provision, it is necessary to implement the state budget, and was not subject to the mid-session cut off which passed last Wednesday. Now that the busy time before cut off has passed, we hope it will move soon. The sooner it gets voted out of Ways & Means to Rules committee, and then to the floor, the sooner it can start the same process in the house. This bill is not dead, but each passing day without actions makes it harder to have time to address it in the House.

**How you can get involved?** Let your representative know your opinion, especially if your representative is on the committee that is hearing these bills. Do some research, go to [WA4bees.org](http://WA4bees.org) and read up on the issues. On 5017, read point #3, Level The Playing Field; on 1654, read point #1, Provide Adequate Forage. Review the proposals at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1654&year=2015> and <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5017&year=2015>

Contact your representatives, by phone or email. Keep your message brief, to the point, and not just copied and pasted. Constituents hold special weight with their legislators. We must tell them what we think.

Both these proposal will make beekeeping better in our state. Let's work to get them passed.

Tim Hiatt, Legislative Chair, WSBA