



Board Agenda Item 31

DATE: March 3, 2026

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Melissa Cregan, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures

SUBJECT: Retroactive Revenue Agreement for the Apiary Protection Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Waive the annual registration fee for any beekeeper, apiary owner, apiary operator, or person, who is a hobbyist not in the business of beekeeping and who possesses nine or fewer colonies pursuant to California Food and Agriculture Code, section 29044; and**
2. **Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute a retroactive revenue Agreement with the California Department of Food and Agriculture for the Apiary Protection Program, Revenue Agreement No. 25-0551-000-SA, effective January 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, with a total reimbursable amount of \$15,296.**

There is no additional Net County Cost (NCC) associated with the recommended actions. Approval of the first recommended action will waive the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) registration fee, allowable under California Food and Agriculture Code, section 29044, for hobbyist beekeepers who are not in the beekeeping business, promoting registration compliance.

Approval of the second recommended action will allow the County to enter into an Agreement with CDFA to reimburse the Department's costs for activities related to apiary protection. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board not approve the first recommended action, hobbyist beekeepers with nine or fewer colonies will be required to pay an annual registration fee to CDFA.

Should your Board not approve the second recommended action, the Department will not receive funding from CDFA for mandated activities related to apiary protection.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

This revenue agreement is retroactive to January 1, 2026. The Department received the Agreement from CDFA on December 22, 2025 and it's being brought before your Board in accordance with Agenda Item deadlines.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in NCC associated with either of the recommended actions. Regarding the first recommended action, the registration fee is paid to and collected by CDFA. If the second recommended action is approved, the County will receive approximately \$15,296 in revenue from CDFA to fund activities

related to apiary protection. Sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues are included in the Agriculture Org 4010 FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget and will be included in the FY 2026-27 Recommended Budget request.

DISCUSSION:

Managed honeybees play a critical role in the production of a variety of commodities throughout the state, most notably in the almond industry. Thousands of shipments containing beehives enter California every year, supplying the estimated 2.8 million hives required to pollinate California's almond orchards. Almonds are the County's number one agricultural commodity with a 2024 value of over \$1.4 billion.

The California Food and Agricultural Code requires every beekeeper, apiary owner, apiary operator, broker, or person in possession of any apiary that is located within the state to register the number of colonies in each apiary that is owned or possessed by the person and the location of each apiary. In addition to registering the apiary, each beekeeper is required to pay a registration fee for the year. Registration is accomplished online through the BeeWhere website and the registration fee is paid to and collected by CDFA.

The California Food and Agricultural Code also authorizes the board of supervisors of any county, with the approval of the Secretary of CDFA, to waive the registration fee for any beekeeper, apiary owner, apiary operator, or person, who is a hobbyist not in the business of beekeeping and who possesses nine or fewer colonies. The registration fee for a hobbyist beekeeper with nine or fewer colonies is currently \$10 annually. In 2025, five hobbyist beekeepers were registered in Fresno County. Waiving the registration fee for hobbyist beekeepers encourages registration and compliance, improving disease tracking and hive management, while avoiding the discouragement that even modest fees can create for hobbyists. On October 7, 2025, the Secretary of CDFA authorized individual counties to waive the apiary registration fee for beekeepers possessing nine or fewer colonies.

The California Food and Agricultural Code authorizes County Agricultural Commissioners to enforce various apiary and pest prevention laws including registration, apiary identification, and hive placement, as well as the inspection and abatement of pests. These laws are designed to support the beekeeping industry and prevent the introduction and spread of pests.

The recommended Agreement provides funds for Department staff to assist beekeepers with registration and verify registration requirements, and conduct apiary inspections and abatement activities. These mandatory activities are already being performed and this funding will provide resources to cover departmental costs while utilizing existing staffing levels.

The recommended Agreement deviates from standard County language in that it includes mutual liability. The Department believes this is an acceptable business risk.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Agreement No. 25-0551-000-SA with CDFA

CAO ANALYST:

Amy Ryals