

House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
April 29, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Jack G. McFarland, chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development, called the meeting to order at 8:56 a.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jack G. McFarland, chairman
Representative Francis C. Thompson, vice chairman
Representative Ryan Bourriaque
Representative Rhonda Gaye Butler
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Wayne McMahan
Representative Buddy Mincey, Jr.
Representative Neil Riser
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Larry Selders
Representative Vincent "Vinney" J. St. Blanc III
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.
Representative Malinda B. White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Kendricks "Ken" Brass
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Dustin Miller

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nicholas Cole, attorney
Trinicia Bryant, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 49 by Representative Riser

Representative Riser presented House Bill No. 49, which increases certain weights and measures registration and license fees under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 49.

Representative Riser offered a motion to report House Bill No. 49 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 49 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Bryant, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Dustin Miller, Mincey, Riser, Romero, Selders, St. Blanc, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 239 by Representative Riser

Representative Riser presented House Bill No. 239, which provides relative to the harvesting of cypress trees on state property.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 239.

Representative Riser offered amendments to:

1. Add exceptions to the cutting, clearing, removing, or diverting for sale or use of any cypress trees on state property for the following:
 - (a) Trails or roads on wildlife management areas.
 - (b) Integrated coastal protection projects or a project listed in the comprehensive master coastal protection plan as defined in present law.

- (c) Levee or drainage project by the departments, agencies, boards, or commissions of the state and their political subdivisions, including but not limited to a levee district or levee and drainage district as identified in present law.
2. Make proposed law effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.
3. Make technical changes.

Representative Riser offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Riser, Romero, Selders, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Representative Romero offered a motion to report House Bill No. 239 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 239 was reported with amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Riser, Romero, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 2 in support and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 640 by Representative Schexnayder

On behalf of Representative Schexnayder, Representative C. Travis Johnson presented House Bill No. 640, which provides relative to industrial hemp.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 640.

Mr. Justin Gremillion, Louisiana Department of Health, 628 N. 4th St., Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 342-9509, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 640.

Mr. Blaine Jennings, Virgin Hemp Farms, 161 Whittington Drive, Lafayette, Louisiana 70503, (337) 849-6481, spoke in support of House Bill No. 640.

Representative White offered amendments to:

1. Clarify "delta-9 THC" as "total delta-9 THC".

2. Change the term "contract carrier" to "handler".
3. Change the definition of "THC" to mean "a combination of tetrahydrocannabinol and tetrahydrocannabinolic acid" and change the term "Total THC concentration" to "THC".
4. Remove the LDAF's authority to detain, seize, destroy, or embargo any industrial hemp crop that contains a THC concentration that exceeds the acceptable hemp THC level provided in federal law.
5. Add a provision of preemption if federal law is ever less restrictive than state law as it applies to consumable hemp products.
6. Distinguish the amount of total delta-9 THC concentration from total THC concentration regarding the approval of consumable hemp products manufactured, distributed, imported, or sold in La.
7. Remove a provision that specified that "consumable hemp products" do not include foods, food ingredients, or food additives generally recognized as safe by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
8. Make technical changes.

Representative White offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Riser, Romero, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Representative Selders offered a motion to report House Bill No. 640 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 640 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Selders, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 6 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 2 in support and 8 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 230 by Representative C. Travis Johnson

Representative C. Travis Johnson presented House Bill No. 230, which provides relative to aquaculture development and the Louisiana Aquatic Chelonian Research and Promotion Board.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 230.

Representative Butler offered a motion to report House Bill No. 230 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 230 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McMahan, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, and Wheat, voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 647 by Representative C. Travis Johnson

Representative C. Travis Johnson presented House Bill No. 647, which creates the Delta Agriculture Research and Sustainability District.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 647.

Representative Travis Johnson offered amendments to:

1. Remove Madison Parish from the composition of the district.
2. Increase the composition of the board of commissioners from 15 to 22 and adds the following seats to the board:
 - (a) The governor or his designee.
 - (b) The commissioner of agriculture and forestry or his designee.
 - (c) The president of the local governing authority for the parish of Concordia or his designee.
 - (d) The president of Grambling State University or his designee.

- (e) The mayor of the town of Clayton or his designee.
 - (f) The mayor of the town of Ferriday or his designee.
 - (g) The mayor of the town of Vidalia or his designee.
3. Remove "otherwise" from the methods by which the district can acquire property.
 4. Make technical changes.

Representative Travis Johnson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Butler, C. Travis Johnson, McMahan, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Representative Thompson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 647 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 647 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Butler, C. Travis Johnson, McMahan, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 104 by Representative Wheat

Representative Wheat presented House Bill No. 104, which provides relative to the composition of the Louisiana Board of Animal Health and its regulatory authority over the disposal of livestock animal carcasses.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 104.

Representative Romero offered a motion to report House Bill No. 104 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 104 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 177 by Representative Wheat

Representative Wheat presented House Bill No. 177, which provides relative to the sterilization of animals sold or released for adoption from shelters.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard., Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 177.

Representative Thompson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 177 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 177 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 404 by Representative Thompson

Representative Thompson presented House Bill No. 404, which provides relative to lifetime livestock brand recordation and fees.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 404.

Representative Mincey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 404 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 404 was reported favorably by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, Selders, St, Blanc, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 1 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 622 by Representative Thompson

Representative Thompson presented House Bill No. 622, which provides relative to the office of rural development and the Rural Development Program and provided the committee with a copy of a state district map, Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806, (225) 922-1233, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 622.

Representative Turner offered amendments to:

1. Change "water quality and treatment" to "water quality and sewer treatment" as policy areas considered to be part of rural development and revitalization.
2. Define the term "regional planning commission districts".
3. Modify the definition of "rural development and revitalization" to include sewer treatment.
4. Add a requirement for the director to hire eight new regional directors to be placed in each of the regional planning districts of the state as outlined in present law.
5. Make technical changes.

Representative Turner offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 14 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, Selders, St. Blanc, Turner, and Wheat voted yea.

Representative Mincey offered a motion to report House Bill No. 622 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 622 was reported with amendments by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Riser, Romero, St. Blanc, Turner, Wheat, and White voted yea.

House Bill No. 649 by Representative McFarland

Representative McFarland presented House Bill No. 649, which provides relative to the repurchase of certain mechanical equipment by a wholesaler.

Representative Riser offered a motion to report House Bill No. 649 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 649 was reported favorably by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Riser, Romero, St. Blanc, Turner, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not wish to speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

The minutes from the 2020 Regular Session dated May 7 and May 20 and the minutes from the 2020 2nd Extraordinary Session dated October 12, 2020, were presented to the committee for approval. Representative Riser offered a motion to approve the minutes. Without objection, the minutes were approved by a vote of 15 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Bourriaque, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, Mincey, Riser, Romero, St. Blanc, Turner, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Introduction and Comments by Dr. Mike Strain, Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry

Commissioner Mike Strain, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, 5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806, (225) 922-1233, provided an overview of the department and presented a PowerPoint, Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records. He also provided an overview of Louisiana's food and agriculture production and consumption, commodity prices, damages sustained to agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture as a result of hurricanes, trade value of agriculture exports, Louisiana crops, commodity prices, and legislative issues.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative St. Blanc offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Thompson, Butler, Deshotel, C. Travis Johnson, McCormick, McMahan, St. Blanc, Turner, Wheat, and White voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Jack G. McFarland
House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development

Date adopted: