

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

Minutes of Meeting
2022 Regular Session
April 28, 2022

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 1:03 p.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Jack G. McFarland, chairman
Representative Ryan Bourriaque
Representative Kendricks "Ken" Brass
Representative Rhonda Gaye Butler
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Adrian Fisher
Representative C. Travis Johnson
Representative Wayne McMahan
Representative Buddy Mincey, Jr.
Representative Troy D. Romero
Representative Vincent "Vinney" J. St. Blanc, III
Representative Christopher Turner
Representative William "Bill" Wheat, Jr.
Representative Malinda B. White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Dustin Miller, vice chairman
Representative Marcus Anthony Bryant
Representative Danny McCormick
Representative Larry Selders
Representative Francis C. Thompson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nicholas Cole, attorney
Brandy Phillips, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 553 by Representative McKnight

Representative McKnight presented House Bill No. 553, which provides relative to suitability requirements for persons associated with medical marijuana production.

Representative Deshotel offered amendments to:

1. Retain the term "applicant".
2. Repeal or remove the following terms and definitions: "criminal history record", "department", "division", "exercise significant influence", "permit", and "therapeutic marijuana" or "medical marijuana".
3. Remove the persons required to obtain a permit from the regulatory agency.
4. Remove the requirements a person applying for a permit must do.
5. Remove the criteria by which an applicant is denied a permit.
6. Remove the criteria relating to permit renewal.
7. Remove the criteria by which a regulatory agency may deny, suspend, or revoke a permit issued.
8. Repeal present law provisions relative to the processes and procedures whereby a regulatory agency can request and obtain fingerprints and a background check for the purposes of satisfying suitability in order to issue a license or permit.
9. Remove the La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry as the state regulatory agency for conducting suitability investigations.
10. Prohibit any government agency from requiring an applicant for a specialty license or permit for the production of recommended marijuana for therapeutic use to undergo a suitability investigation or submit to a criminal background check as a criteria for obtaining a license or permit.

11. Authorize a contractor to conduct background checks on prospective employees for the purpose of making an employment decision.
12. Make technical changes.

Mr. John Davis, Good Day Farm Louisiana, 18350 Petroleum Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 938-3305, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 553.

Mr. Hampton Grunewald, LSU AgCenter, 101 Efferson Hall, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 978-6167, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 553.

Representative Deshotel 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, Bourriaque, Brass, Butler, Deshotel, Fisher, Travis Johnson, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Representative White offered a motion to report House Bill No. 553 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 553 was reported with amendments by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Bourriaque, Brass, Butler, Deshotel, Fisher, Travis Johnson, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 29 in support and 1 for information only. 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 opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee record.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Mincey offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 13 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives McFarland, Bourriaque, Brass, Butler, Deshotel, Fisher, Travis Johnson, McMahan, Mincey, Romero, St. Blanc, Wheat, and White voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Date adopted: