

One Hundred Third Legislature - First Session - 2013

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB68

Chairperson: Senator Ken Schilz

Committee: Agriculture

Date of Hearing: January 29, 2013

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

LB 68 amends the Nebraska Plant Protection and Plant Pest Act (Act) to facilitate and streamline the enforcement of the Act. The Act establishes standards and restrictions for plants in the state. The three current categories for nursery licenses no longer reflect the practices of the industry. LB 68 provides that all currently licensed dealers, growers, and brokers would be combined into the category of nursery stock distributor. All distributors of nursery stock would have the same fee structure and application process. This simplifies the licensing process. LB 68 also creates a more equitable fee structure, with the fee based on the amount of inspection required due to the size of the area to be inspected.

LB 68 also clarifies the Department of Agriculture authority for it to be able to assist producers in obtaining required plant health documentation for interstate and international exports of agricultural commodities including grain, seed, and nursery stock.

Cash funds collected and used to support the activities of this program will soon no longer cover the program activities. Nursery fees were last increased in 1996. The proposed fees have been set so the Department can continue to perform the activities required and authorized by the Act. The proposed fee structure would help prevent the reduction of services to the nursery and export industries. This could prevent the increased potential of an injurious plant pest being introduced and becoming established in the state. If such pest did become established it could potentially limit the ability of Nebraska producers to move their products interstate and internationally.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Ken Schilz