

SUBJECT: Creating the wine industry development advisory committee

COMMITTEE: Agriculture and Livestock — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 4 ayes — T. King, C. Anderson, Cyrier, González

0 nays

3 absent — Rinaldi, Simpson, Springer

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 9 — 30-1 (Hall), on the local and uncontested calendar

WITNESSES: For — Kyle Frazier, Texas Wine and Grape Growers

Against — None

On — Mary York, Texas Department of Agriculture

BACKGROUND: In 2005, the 79th Legislature enacted SB 1137 by Madla, which created the Texas Wine Industry Development Act and the wine industry development advisory committee. The committee was charged with developing a long-term vision and a marketable identity for the Texas wine industry.

The bill also established a wine industry development fund account in the state’s general revenue fund to be used for research, surveys, and other projects related to developing the industry and education programs.

SB 1016 by Estes, enacted by the 81st Legislature in 2009, changed the name of the committee and its focus to include marketing.

DIGEST: SB 880 would abolish the wine industry development and marketing advisory committee and create the wine industry development advisory committee.

The new committee, in addition to assuming the duties of the former committee, would assist and advise the commissioner in determining the best, most productive, and most efficient expenditures of the wine industry development fund. The commissioner of agriculture could appoint a person from the former committee to serve on the new committee. In making appointments to the new committee, the commissioner would select members from entities representing a cross-section of the wine industry, including:

- grape growers from various regions of Texas;
- wineries representing a variety of formats from across Texas;
- researchers or educators specializing in viticulture or enology;
- consumers not affiliated with the alcoholic beverage industry;
- the Texas Department of Agriculture; and
- the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

The committee would be required to provide the commissioner with a report by September 1 of each year containing a summary of the committee's discussions and recommendations from the preceding fiscal year, a proposed schedule and plan of action for the new fiscal year, a proposed budget and spending plan for expenditures of the fund, and other information requested by the commissioner.

By November 1 of each year, the commissioner would be required to consider the recommendations of the committee in preparing the schedule, plan of action, budget, and spending plan for the current fiscal year.

The bill would repeal Agriculture Code, sec. 50B.0015, to conform to changes made by the bill in abolishing the wine industry development and marketing advisory committee.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

SB 880 would help the Texas wine industry continue to grow and expand by making changes to the wine industry development and marketing advisory committee. The wine industry benefits the Texas economy

because it provides jobs and tourism opportunities, and the bill would change the committee to better reflect the current demographics of the industry. It also would narrow the committee's focus to exclude marketing, allowing the use of more resources to develop other aspects of the industry.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

SB 880 would continue inappropriate governmental involvement in private business and use of government funds to support one particular industry. Private businesses should be responsible for helping themselves and not depend on government assistance.