

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
Robert Rivas, Chair
AB 920 (Agiar-Curry) – As Introduced February 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Agriculture: cotton pests abatement districts: organization and establishment: authorized counties

SUMMARY: This bill deletes the authority to establish Cotton Pests Abatement Districts in the Counties of Orange, San Diego, and Ventura.

EXISTING LAW: Provides procedures for the formation of pest abatement districts for the purpose of pest control or abatement. The Cotton Pests Abatement District Act authorizes the organization and establishment of cotton pests abatement districts by the boards of supervisors of the Counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Cotton pests abatement districts were first established in 1982 to help fight the pink bollworm. The pink bollworm is a type of moth, and is one of the most destructive cotton plant pests. The first reported cotton infestation in the United States (U.S.) by the pink bollworm occurred in 1917. By 1963, the pink bollworm had spread throughout the southwestern U.S. and Southern California.

Currently, the board of supervisors in seven Southern California counties can authorize the creation and organization of cotton pests abatement districts to protect the integrity of the cotton grown in California. However, this authority is outdated in three counties that no longer cultivate cotton as a crop. Orange, San Diego, and Ventura Counties are no longer operating, or in need of, the authority to establish a cotton pests abatement district because of this change in their local agriculture.

To protect agricultural production, state and local governments help coordinate and operate pest control activities. Pest abatement districts are local government organizations that prevent, mitigate, and control agricultural pests, while also seeking to reduce the use of chemical pesticides. “Pests” can include plants, animals, insects, or other threats that are harmful to the agricultural industry in the State.

According to the author, after 50 years of effort and integrated pest management work, the pink bollworm was declared eradicated from California in 2018. Because of this, it is appropriate to clean up existing law granting authority to create cotton pests abatement districts to reflect where the pink bollworm or other cotton plant pests may actually be found in California. Since cotton has not been grown for many years in Orange, San Diego, or Ventura Counties, this bill is necessary to reflect the progress made on the pink bollworm and the realistic need for cotton pests abatement districts in California law.

According to supporters, this bill removes the authority to establish Cotton Pests Abatement Districts from Orange, San Diego, and Ventura Counties, because in these three counties the authority is outdated and no longer needed.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association

Opposition

None on file

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